2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

773 the fowl, the man merely said, 'The fowl is thirsty'. Thus his wife knew that people had been deceiving her and she remained with him. Afterwards she bore a daughter, and vowed solemnly that her child should never eat fowl. Later a son followed, and the man declared that the boy too must refrain from eating fowl. That is why the first-born son and first-born daughter of all Namoos have the fowl avoidance; but later children may eat it, for if they, too, were prohibited, who would consume the fowls which men sacrifice to their ancestors?

771 If we bear in mind the enormous importance Tallensi attach to marriage and progeny, we can sympathize with the respect they pay to the common domestic fowl in return for this apparently trivial benefit conferred on their ancestor. Of course nobody knows or cares who this ancestor was, but it would not occur to anybody to doubt the truth of this tale. Every day some animal, domestic or wild, becomes a shrine (*bayər*), the symbol and medium of contact with the ancestor spirits, to some person or another in every Tale settlement; and the occasion of this ritual transformation of a commonplace creature is always a piece of good or ill fortune associated with it. Nor would the fact, admittedly contrary to ordinary experience, that a fowl broke into speech, disconcert the natives. They see no need for explaining away such incongruities, either by invoking the supernatural or by referring it to a fabulous age when animals possessed the power of speech. 'That is the story', they declare, and that is enough for them; as we might say, it fits in with the logic of the myth.

186 This casual attitude to the myth is due to the fact that the natives attach little importance to it in comparison with the observance it seeks to explain. For the myth is simply a formulation of the idea that the fowl taboo is the fundamental symbol of the social definition of Namoos. Everywhere within the social ambit of the Tallensi, and at all times, Namoos are those who are subject to distinctive ritual and moral restrictions in virtue of their agnatic descent; and amongst these the fowl taboo is crucial. That is how others think of Namoos, and that is how they themselves visualize their social identity. Through these observances the individual identifies himself in thought and feeling with the fraternity of clans of which his own is a part and, what is of equal significance, with the dead but still regnant forebears.

The anonymity of the ancestor in the myth shows that he stands for the prototype of all the ancestors who must necessarily have gone before in order that the present generation of men should exist, and to whom the living owe their whole social order. It is a notion entirely in keeping with the ideas underlying the kinship system of the Tallensi. But for the intervention of the fowl, says the myth, the Namoo stock might never have come into existence; and the taboo which commemorates that event came into being with the birth of their stock, which was at the same time the birth of their role in society. All Namoos, it must be remembered, are concerned with their totemic observances; for those who are themselves exempt from them have this privilege only because they are the brothers or sisters of individuals who are compelled to observe them.

577 The fowl taboo and the ritual observances associated with it symbolize

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the paramount moral values of the Namoos. The oath a Namoo swears by his father and his goatskin and his three cowrie shells to rebut an accusation or assert his honesty is evidence of this.

The natives think of these rules as coeval with their social order. They are axioms of conduct, which men accept without questioning as they accept the fact that one is born a Namoo. Since they are binding on and restricted to the patrilineal line of descent, these avoidances serve to express the ultimate and unconditional validity of agnatic descent, through which the individual's place in a corporate unit is irrevocably fixed at birth, and by which his whole social and spiritual destiny is largely controlled. Through ignorance or stupidity, irreverence or lack of self-control, individuals sometimes, though very rarely, break these taboos. Such lapses will bring down mystical retribution on the sinner's head; that is his affair. They cannot impair the intrinsic validity of these rules or undermine their obligatory character.

It would be inconceivable for a Namoo to flout the taboo of the goatskin loin-cover for the dead. To do so would be a sacrilege so gratuitous and so lunatic as to lie beyond the bounds of sane human behaviour. Actually a situation in which such a sacrilege would be possible would never occur, for the simple reason that a death is an affair of the clan. The clan elders conduct all mortuary and funeral ceremonies, and the inviolability of the prescribed ritual is thus safeguarded by the mechanics of its performance.

It is otherwise with the fowl taboo. This too the natives consider to be something so fundamental and axiomatic that it requires no sanction against possible breach except by accident. The danger of a breach occurs only with children. The first-born child who eats a fowl or even a hen's egg, either through inadvertence, through greed, or through childish recklessness, may sink into a decline (*u burəmrəme*), or at the least will break out in a rash on the head (*u zug koorəme*). But such a transgression by a child is venial, and the antidote is simple. The child is given an infusion of fowl droppings in water to drink which makes him vomit and so purges him.

Observation and questioning show that breaches of this taboo are as rare as the natives assert them to be. I have often seen a first-born man (*nɔ-kihir*, pl. *-kihib*, one who taboos the fowl) sacrificing fowls to his ancestor spirits and leaving them to others to consume. After such a rite a *nɔ-kihir* always washes his hands carefully lest he contaminate his food at the next meal with the blood of the fowl. Not only do parents, siblings, and other relatives take care to prevent children from breaking the taboo, but the children who have to observe it have a horror of doing so. By the time they are five or six years old children will tell an inquirer with great emphasis, 'I am an eldest child, and I don't eat fowl'. Though they do not know the myth that accounts for the taboo, they appreciate its obligatory character.

We have spoken of these taboos as symbols of moral values because, though binding on all Namoos, they do not imply specific ties either political or ceremonial, and are obligatory on individuals. Their observance is in the last resort a matter of conscience and belief. In the widest

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

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social setting they identify Namoo communities by contraposition with non-Namoo neighbours. The phrase 'we of the Mampuru stock' merely labels a category of clans. It becomes a coefficient of conduct for the individual within the context of clanship, local, and community ties.

613 428 627

The dispute over the succession to the custody of the shrine (*bɔyar*) of the founding ancestor of Bɔyada biis at Tongo was a case in point. Saŋgbɔŋ, the son of the deceased custodian, who had been head of Yiyaam biis, one major segment of the lineage, refused to hand the shrine over to Tinta'alam, the oldest living member of the whole lineage. He alleged that the latter's segment (Yidaan biis) were 'sister's children', that is, an attached lineage descended from a Sii man. All the men of Yidaan biis rallied unanimously around Tinta'alam, angry and resentful at this slur on their status. 'If we don't get the *bɔyar*', they explained, 'people will scoff at us, saying that we are the descendants of a slave' (i.e. not the authentic progeny of Mosuor).

The case was argued, with an acrimony which was hard to conceal, before the chief. Saŋgbɔŋ contended that Yidaan biis could not be debarred from taking part in sacrifices to the shrine of Bɔyada, but, as an attached lineage, they had no right to its custody. Tinta'alam, speaking for the whole segment of Yidaan biis, denied this story as a pack of lies, but his opponent refused to abandon his position. At length the chief put the decisive question to the elders who were present. 'What', he asked, 'do the people of Sii taboo?' 'The tortoise (*pakur*), the water tortoise (*miey*), and the crocodile (*bay*)', said one of the elders, 'and they dress their dead in a sheepskin loin-cover (*ba suona pɛhug*), and do not taboo the fowl.' 'And what about you Namoos?' queried the chief. 'Do you avoid the fowl, or do you not? Do you put a sheepskin loin-cover on the dead?' The elders answered this rhetorical question, 'Of course we taboo the fowl! And we use a goatskin for the dead. When Talis slaughter the sheep to gird their dead we would not even touch the meat.' 'Now,' continued the chief, 'if Yidaan had come to live here with his mother's brother as an acknowledged son of a Sii man, would he have discarded his forefathers' taboos?' 'Neither he nor his descendants', exclaimed the elders with one voice; 'if they had done so they would suffer for it, they would all die out.' And an attached lineage which Saŋgbɔŋ had adduced in support of his case was quoted in proof; for they still retain the taboos of the Talis because their founder had been legitimately and ritually a member of a Talis clan. Moreover, there was the case of Puliebar yidem, the Tongo lineage living at Gorogo, who keep their Namoo taboos. There was a time when they lost many members through death in quick succession, and diviners revealed that this was a retribution for trying to participate in the initiation cult of their Talis kin. The tone and attitude of the elders showed impressively the moral importance to the natives of these taboos. It was common knowledge, they said, that Tinta'alam and all the members of his segment observe the Namoo taboos. Saŋgbɔŋ's story was palpably false. However, to make the decision conclusive and to save it from rankling it was left to an oracle. A fowl was slaughtered with an invocation to the ancestors and the posture in which it died showed which of the disputants was in the right.

[787]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

jesting altercation about their mythologically founded bonds of mutual coercion. Ta'aŋ, the Gbizug tɛndaana's brother, who often deputizes for him in public ceremonies, has a sharp tongue. When representatives of the tɛndaana and of the Chief of Tongo have to perform some ceremony together he always pretends to mock the Namoos. 'You are only guests here,' he jeers (referring to their immigrant origin), 'I (as representative of Gbizug) have given you land to sit on, but if you don't behave I'll drive you back to Mampurugu, where you came from.' The Tongo men laugh good-humouredly at this sally, and one of them might answer, 'Very true, but if we should decide to go back to Mampurugu and leave you to yourselves, you will just starve'—the reference being to the Chief of Tongo's ritual power over the rain. Elders of Kpata'ar and Gundaat, which have a similar politico-ritual relationship to that of Tongo and Gbizug, often tease one another in the same way when they meet to perform a ceremony together.

Tallensi say this is just fun, jesting (*koohəg*); but we see again that this apparently spontaneous jesting acts as a means of reconciling and counteracting the tensions of a double-edged social relationship. Where two corporate groups are structurally divided from each other to the point of having potentially competitive interests likely to lead to conflict at one level of the social organization, but are at the same time bound to each other by strong ties of obligatory co-operation and goodwill in another aspect of their social relations, the undercurrent of hostility or mutual wariness is deflected by a jest. You jest with people who must be friendly to you in terms of one set of loyalties and may be hostile to you in terms of another, and with whom you are on an equal footing as far as mutual rights and duties go. In the social relations of individuals with one another, this configuration occurs between siblings-in-law; hence the notion that the joking relationship between corporate units is modelled on *dakiirət*, the relationship of siblings-in-law.

Privileged Moral Coercion

There is another peculiar tie belonging to the category of social relations which we have been discussing. So far as my information goes, it is also confined to the Talis and their congeners. Its moral aspect is of particular interest as a clue to the values that lie at the back of the basic principles of Talis social structure.

The natives have no name for this relationship. In virtue of it, pairs of clans or lineages usually on the margin of the field of clanship of each, but not joking partners, have the privilege of moral coercion over each other's members. The natives describe this as a taboo (*kihər*). No member of one group may refuse a request of any member of the other. 'They *dare not* refuse', one informant declared, with obvious solemnity, as if to emphasize that it was a question of deep moral values. 'If they don't give what we ask, they would die, their house (i.e. lineage) would fall to pieces (*ba yiri gbi'irme*).' In other words, if anyone violates this bond, not only he but his entire line of descent would perish—the most calamitous retribution conceivable to the natives and one which befalls only those who transgress the ultimate tenets of religion and ethics.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

571 Hence, people connected in this way are careful not to ask each other
●577 for things. In the hunt, if a member of one group kills an animal and any members of the other group happen to be on the spot, the slayer will not lay a hand on the kill until the latter have cut a portion for themselves.

765 Sometimes it happens that a great tragedy overwhelms a member of
571 one group and he abandons himself to grief, refusing food, drink, and
577 consolation. Then, as a last resort, his relatives send for the head of the lineage whose requests cannot be refused, to persuade the stricken man to face life again. This happened, for example, when Puyel of Wakii's child was accidentally burnt to death. He was prostrate with grief, and said that he wished to die. Thereupon his brothers sent for the Bɔyarna'ab of Gundaat, the clan to whose members Puyel's lineage must yield, and the Bɔyarna'ab persuaded him to accept food and water, a sign that he was ready to throw off his despair. 'It is a matter of our fathers and our ancestors', the Bɔyarna'ab declared when he told the story. 'He dare not refuse; I would call on the Earth, and my *bɔyar*, and our ancestors, to witness, and his house would be destroyed if he remained obstinate.' Elders of other Talis clans explained the inviolability of this bond in almost the same words. It rests upon religious sanctions, the cult of the Earth and the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, common to all the Talis.

The Rationalization of Clanship Ties

811 Tallensi have no explanation to offer for the joking partnership or the bond of privileged moral coercion between clans or lineages, though they regard them as being somehow connected with the network of clanship. 'It is a matter of our fathers and forefathers', is all that even the best informed elders have to say about these ties.

*618 Clanship ties, however, always have the warrant of dogma or myth, as
811 we have seen. It is worth while examining a few more instances.

Sometimes common agnatic ancestry is claimed, though no common ancestor can be cited by name or any point of convergence of the different genealogies suggested. This is the case with Yinduuri and Sii, for instance. Frequently the fiction of a cognatic link is used. Thus, in explanation of the clanship ties existing between Degal and Kpata'arna'ab yidɛm of Kpata'ar, it is said that the latter are the sororal nephews (*ahɔs*) of the former. The name of the Degal woman who is thus alleged to have been the progenitrix of the Kpata'ar lineage is unknown, and no Kpata'ar man would even speculate as to which of their ancestors might have been her husband. Similarly, Dakuor yidɛm of Bunkiuk are said to be the descendants of a sororal nephew of Kpata'arna'ab yidɛm with whom they have ties of clanship. The fictional character of this formula is revealed when we compare the neighbouring clan of Samiit. The people of Samiit say that their founding ancestor was a Wakii man (hence their ties of clanship with Wakii), who migrated to the top of the hills because he had by accident killed and eaten a python, which is a taboo at Wakii. After wandering about for some time, he found refuge with the people of Gundaat, one of whose daughters was later given to him as a wife. The people of Samiit are the posterity (*tu'u*) of this pair. Strictly speaking, therefore, the people of Samiit are the sororal nephews of Gundaat; and

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

gird their dead with a sheepskin loin cover (*ba suona pɛhug*) and taboo (*kih*) the tortoise (*pakur*) and the water-tortoise (*mieŋ*)'. The people of Zubiuŋ, as we have seen, also fix upon their mortuary and funeral rites and their totemic avoidances as the two main indices of their affinity with the Talis. They add to this their special ritual relationship with the Earth, symbolized by the office of the tendaana.

Most of the Talis, it is true, gird the dead (that is, males who have begotten children before they die and are therefore considered to be socially mature) with a sheepskin; but there are a few exceptions. The people of Ka'ar use an oribi (*walag*) skin, and the people of Gorogo, as well as some of the Teelag lineages, use only a piece of string

The sheepskin has the same ritual value for the Talis as the goatskin has for the Namoos. Identical beliefs and attitudes lie behind these differences of usage, which are clearly a function of the social cleavage between Namoos and Talis. Members of either group often have great knowledge of the mythology, the ritual practices, and the distinctive beliefs and customs of the other group. They pick up this knowledge when they go on visits to their maternal kin in the other group, and the underlying identity of beliefs and values makes this easy. Yet it would be inconceivable for the people of either group deliberately to take over the usages of the other group. The assimilations of custom that have taken place have been unconscious.

Talis explain deviations from the common ritual, such as those of the people of Ka'ar or of Gorogo, by the cliché, 'Our ancestors desired it so'. Thus the Gorogo people claim that their founding ancestor originally came from the Woologa country. They still have ceremonial ties with the people of Chana, which they say was their ancestor's place of origin. They connect their custom of putting a string on a corpse with this myth, for both myth and custom distinguish them from the other Hill Talis. It is significant that the Teelag lineages which have the same custom have no clanship ties with Gorogo, nor is any explanation offered by either group of the common ritual usage.

The Tallensi see the binding force of any observance held by the lineage or clan as deriving from an ancestor whose edict it is said to have been. The concept *kih*, it must be remembered, is applied not only to ritual prohibitions but also to ritual injunctions. The sheepskin loin cover for the dead is also a *kihar*. The moral imperative of a ritual prohibition or injunction—a *kihar*—is connected with the dependence of the lineage on its ancestors' goodwill for its survival and welfare. And there is another point. The most sacred duty owed by son to parent or parent to child is the performance of his or her funeral ceremonies. It is unthinkable, and it has never been known, for a native to fail in this duty, though nobody can compel him to do it. This is the case in spite of the fact that funeral rites are also the concern of the whole lineage and clan. In funeral ceremonies the structure of the lineage and clan emerges into action as perhaps in no other Tale institution. And it emerges in such a way as to show up clearly how the moral responsibility of the individual to his forbears is a function of his rights and duties as a lineage member and is a factor in the cohesion of the lineage.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

A small number of Tongo people have gone yet farther afield in search of a livelihood: to Biun and other peripheral settlements, to Mampurugu, and, increasingly in recent years, to the tempting Eldorado of Ashanti and the Colony. Thus, not all the members of the Tongo branch of Mosuor biis and its accessory lineages live at Tongo at any given time; but within its confines live only members of the sub-clan and their families; and for all members of the sub-clan, wherever they may be living, Tongo is their home, the centre of gravity of their social existence.

We have said before that no two Tale settlements are exactly alike. Allowing for specific differences, however, the local and social circumscription of Tongo may be taken as typical. The general rule is that boundaries exist in terms of social cleavages co-ordinated with residential distribution, and not of geographical or topographical features; and this rule applies both to the spatial relations of contiguous settlements and to those of parts of a settlement with one another. Community and locality cannot be dissociated. The maxim, 'A *tey* is not a *tey* if there are no people in it', always cited to explain the strong sense of ethical obligation felt by the natives to accept a suitable immigrant in any community, if land is available, sums this up. The boundary disputes that have become common between chiefs and headmen in recent years turn on the contradiction between the conception of a defined territorial boundary fostered by British rule, and the type of social boundary inherent in the native social structure.

A revealing case occurred among the Hill Talis. The elaborate interlocking of the Hill Talis clans with one another through clanship ties, ritual collaboration, local cohesion, and political loyalties, and the diffused solidarity to which this gives rise, impel them to common or mutually supporting action in crises. Yet even among them, social boundaries divide clan from clan and maximal lineage from maximal lineage both spatially and structurally, and come into operation in certain situations. But these social boundaries are far less firm than those between Tongo and its neighbours. Groups of contiguous clans cohere to nearly the same extent as a genealogically organic community like Tongo. Tenzugu, in particular, and Yinduuri-Zandoya, form two such close-knit sub-communities within the wider community of all the Hill Talis.

Since 1936 a boundary dispute has embittered the relations of the Golibdaana and the Yinduurna'aba, who are recognized by the Administration as headman of Tenzugu and headman of Yinduur-Zandoya respectively. It is an insoluble dispute, bound to remain a chronic source of friction as long as these two headmen exercise the territorially defined powers entrusted to them by the Administration.

The dispute concerns a segment of Zandoya living on the slope of the Hills between Yinduuri and Tenzugu. It was at length, after many evasions on the Golibdaana's part, brought before the Chief of Tongo for arbitration. But this ended, inevitably, in a deadlock. The Golibdaana, crafty and overweening, as only a man of his extravagant wealth and unyielding temper could be, when he knew himself to be in the wrong, took his stand on a criterion often used by Administrative officers in such disputes. The group in question, he claimed, was living on land that

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

silk-cotton, are prominent landmarks in a country of monotonous plains; hence settlements and sections often bear the names of species of trees found there.

Kuorəg was thus named, according to popular etymology, because the Soog Yikpɛmdaana, who holds the ritual jurisdiction over the land on which the homesteads of Kuorəg stand, ritually allocated or 'cut' (*kuo*) the sites for all these homesteads when Tongo men first settled there. In the same way popular etymology explains the name Dekpieŋ ('it is hard') as derived from the hardness (*kpeoŋ*) of the soil in that part of the settlement as compared with that of Puhug or Seug. Seug literally means 'the rainy season', but no one in Tongo was ever able to suggest how this section acquired its name; and this is characteristic of very many settlement and section names in Taleland.

To the people of Tongo their present residential constellation is the visible deposit, as it were, of the continuous expansion of the sub-clan through many generations within the limits of its geographical environment and social boundaries. They read the spatial disposition of the four sections as a record of their structural evolution, as a map of the contemporary constitution, and as proof of the chronological retrospect of the sub-clan. Mosuor came to settle at Puhug, where his grave still marks the site of his homestead. As his posterity increased in numbers, they began to move outwards in the same way as young men migrate to Zoo, Gbambee, and farther, nowadays, and for the same reason, shortage of farm-land. Thus Guŋ, Kuorəg, and Seug were occupied. Later, the descendants of those who founded Guŋ became too numerous for the land available there, and, prevented from expanding into Wakii by the social barriers between Tongo and that clan, filtered gradually into the area that is now Dekpieŋ. Arguing from what may be observed nowadays, they say that this was largely a process of occupying hitherto vacant land at a time when the population was very small. But it was partly, also, a process of dispossessing and pushing out to their present location the people of Zubiuŋ and of Gbizug, who claim to have lived at Puhug originally. In proof of this they cite their myths of origin, the fact that the dancing-ground in Puhug is sacred because it is the site of Tɛndaan Gɛnət's homestead, and the ritual jurisdiction exercised over part of the land of Puhug by Gbizug and over the remainder by Zubiuŋ. Indeed, there are Zubiuŋ graves on land now occupied by Dekpieŋ men which are said to date back only three to five generations. This proves that the people of Zubiuŋ were still yielding ground to the Tɔndɛm, as they themselves admit, when elders alive to-day were 'already born'.

There is nothing derogatory in such a retreat. On the contrary, Gbizug and Zubiuŋ elders boast of it as additional evidence of the dependence of the people of Tongo on their ritual benevolence and bounty. It is a cardinal rule of Tale ethics that a request for land to build on and farm—especially if it comes from a kinsman, friend, or neighbour—may not be refused if it can be granted without hardship. There was formerly, and there still is to a small extent, land to spare at Gbizug and at Zubiuŋ. Tongo people have innumerable ties of kinship and neighbourhood with Gbizug and Zubiuŋ, which are the more effective on account of the ties

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of politico-ritual unity and solidarity existing between the three clans. To give up land to them is, therefore, an act of virtue that creates yet closer mutual bonds.

The four sections of Tongo are not marked off from one another by territorial boundaries. But each is more or less concentrated in one locality, forming a more or less exclusive local unit, looked at from within. Members of one section are not found living right in the middle of another section. In theory they are at liberty to do so. In practice they would find it impossible, owing partly to the absence of unowned land at Tongo, but mainly to the pull of lineage loyalties. For the territorial segmentation of Tongo is a function of its precise and definitive lineage segmentation; a section is the local framework of a lineage segment. By the lineage criterion the sections are relatively autonomous units within the limits set by their common descent, but they are held together in a remarkably stable social equilibrium by their common interests. This has a counterpart in their territorial relations, which show them to have reached a stable ecological equilibrium *inter se*. The area occupied by each section is now finally fixed in location and more or less fixed in extent. Where any of them has expanded in the last three or four generations it has been chiefly at the expense of Zubiuŋ and Gbizug, not of another Tongo section. Thus, as in the case of composite clans, a social boundary exists between one section of Tongo and another. There is more intimate and regular daily intercourse, more mutual aid, closer and more binding moral, jural, and ceremonial bonds, between the members of a section, both children and adults, and between their wives, than between them and members, or wives of members, of another section. There are latent hostilities and hence a greater probability of dissension between sections than within sections. Thus they have a competitive orientation towards one another where some common interests, like the chiefship, are concerned.

Territorial Distribution and the Tɛŋ in its Mystical Aspect

As with many other Tale settlements, there is no relation between the territorial distribution of the people of Tongo and the distribution of ritual jurisdiction over the land on which they live. This was the point emphasized by the Yɛnduurna'ab in the case previously quoted. Tongo stretches over the ritual domains of several tɛndaanas. Guŋ proper lies on the outskirts of the Gbeog tɛndaana's *tɛŋ*; most of Puhug is on the Gbizug tɛndaana's ritual territory; Kuorəg is on land under the ritual jurisdiction of the Soog Yikpɛmdaan; Seug partly on Zoo *tɛŋ* and partly on Zubiuŋ *tɛŋ*, Dekpieŋ mostly on Zubiuŋ *tɛŋ*.

The bearing of this on the internal structure of Tongo is only indirect. The section or part of a section dwelling on a particular tɛndaana's *tɛŋ* and thus coming within the scope of his ritual powers has closer ties of neighbourliness and of affinal and cognatic kinship with that tɛndaana's clan than other sections have. Differences in the local taboos of the Earth (*tɛŋɛn kiha*) observed by the people of Tongo symbolize these ties. For example, a red pot must be left on a new grave at Kuorəg, because this is a taboo of Soog *tɛŋ*. Elsewhere in Tongo this is not done. Soog elders and youths always take part in the festive phases of a Kuorəg funeral, in a

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

682 sacrifices of expiation or else 'their house—i.e. line of descent—is destroyed (*ba yiri ymaaɔme*)' in retribution. This is the strongest sanction against homicide among the Tallensi. Whether it is intended or accidental, whether the victim is a clansman or a stranger, and has been slain at home or abroad, homicide is a sin against the Earth and must be expiated. But it is so grave a sin that it can, in fact, never be wholly atoned for. 'You cannot finish paying' the Tallensi say. It is a sin that pursues the wrongdoer's agnatic descendants for generations.

627 682 577 The Tallensi have no juridical machinery for taking penal action against a murderer and do not exact compensation. Between clans homicide may lead to vengeance and war; within the clan it does not. In the latter case it is like a cow that has trampled on its calf and killed it, the natives say. In either case the matter is left to the arbitrament of Earth. Tallensi who have shed human blood take no pride in it. A man who can be persuaded to confide the story of how he killed another speaks of his deed as if it were forced on him by circumstances. Though homicide seems to have been an infrequent occurrence in the past, it was by no means rare; but every instance I have heard of was presented as a reprehensible action, even if it was due to provocation or done in self-help. Informants always draw the moral prescribed by Tale ethical values. So-and-so killed a man and died childless; So-and-so left only one young son; deaths pile up in such-and-such a family because their father had shot a man. In the long run, again, the reaction to sacrilege is greater respect for the moral norm and its ritual sanction.

578 682 Bloodshed and strife are symptoms and causes of deep rifts in or between human communities. The taboos against them show us the Earth as a sanction of solidarity within and between communities; and this is of particular interest in relation to the structure of the settlement. The bond between community and locality has moral implications for the natives that transcend the crude facts of spatial distribution and economic organization in which they are rooted. It is worth while tracing out these implications somewhat further from the starting-point of the individual farmer again.

The Social Framework of Production: Land Tenure

241 471 [461] 431 The farming unit among the Tallensi is the group of male agnates of a single household who usually form a nuclear lineage. Most of the plots it farms are owned by the farming unit, but some may be borrowed for a shorter or longer period and some held by gift. In the case of borrowed or gift land the farmer—distinguished as the 'owner of the farm' (*kuoraana*) —pays no rent to the owner—distinguished as 'the owner of the soil' (*tamraana*)—or tribute to a political authority. An annual gift of grain, when crops are good, is the only return he makes to the owner of the land, and this is a voluntary gesture of gratitude, not a jural obligation. Borrowed land always reverts to the owner. Theoretically gift land can also be resumed at will by the owner. In practice it often becomes the property of the recipient's lineage in the third or fourth generation after the gift, if it has been farmed continuously by that lineage. This is either because donor and recipient are usually kin, related in such a way that

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

241 471 431 the latter can claim a contingent right to the land and cannot be dispossessed without offence to their common ancestor or ancestress; or because the land was virgin at the time of the gift and the donor 'cut' (*kie*) it for the recipient in virtue of being the tendaana of the area. Thus all farm-land is either owned or in process of becoming owned.

471 613 The ownership (*solɔm*) of farm-land is a precise jural concept among the Tallensi. Briefly, it is vested in a lineage and forms the most important part of the lineage patrimony (*faar*). When, in course of time, this lineage splits up, some of the *faar* land will be apportioned among the resulting segments, each of which will retain perpetual and exclusive ownership of its portion. The rest of the *faar* land remains the common property of the whole lineage. Though the bulk of farm-land is owned by nuclear lineages, there is land owned by lineages of larger span than the average nuclear lineage.

471 428 613 577 To say that land is owned by a lineage is equivalent to saying that it is generally acquired by right of inheritance. All males of the lineage have the right to inherit lineage land, but at any given time control over it is vested in the head of the lineage, by right of seniority. He inherits (*vaa*) what amounts to full usufructuary rights within the limits of the co-existing rights of the other members of the lineage. The utilization of the land is at his discretion; he disposes of the crops; and in some settlements he is nominally free to pledge or to sell the land. But he is subject to restraints which observation shows to be very effective. He is bound to provide fairly for the wants of those who share the labour of farming with him. Tallensi formulate this obligation in terms of reciprocity within the productive unit, which they regard as a matter of natural justice and moral duty. They emphasize, however, that there is also a [686] strong practical sanction behind the rule. A man who deals meanly or unscrupulously with his younger brothers, sons, or brother's sons will find that they leave him at the first opportunity; and the strength of this sanction has increased now that young men, and even girls, can easily slip away to work abroad. In accordance with this obligation a lineage head always consults his dependants about the disposal of land, crops, or other patrimonial property.

688 471 432 There is also a religious sanction, the converse of the obligation to one's dependants, and the ritual projection of the common interest of the lineage in its patrimonial land. Inherited farm-land is a sacred trust of the ancestors. Their labour won it for human use, hallowed it, and preserved it for their descendants. It belongs to them. To pledge it is a slur on them; to sell it a sacrilege. 'It will kill deaths (*de kura kum*)'—the offended ancestors will cause deaths in the family of the seller—the natives say. And the strength of this sanction is such that only dire necessity will make a man sell ancestral land in the settlements where this is allowed. It is, in fact, an uncommon thing for farm-land to be sold, both for technological reasons, and on account of the ritual sanction against sale. In places like Tongo, land sales do occur, however, but appear to have been more frequent in the past than at present. Three out of every four nuclear lineages at Tongo possess farm plots that they claim have been purchased during the past two or three generations.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

clan must not kill one another or abduct one another's wives, so they must not trespass on one another's land. For this would wreck the mutual loyalties of segment to segment and make impossible the maintenance of the reciprocity of rights and duties on which their corporate life depends. There is, in other words, a generally accepted body of jural and moral norms, binding on all members of the clan and cementing its solidarity, and supported by the powerful sanctions of the ancestor cult and the Earth cult. The security of land tenure is guaranteed by this.

Tallensi say that it is unthinkable for any man to take another's farm-land. It is his ancestral land. You would not borrow a patch for a ground-nut plot without his permission: how could you think of seizing any of it for yourself? The idea is either fantastic or simply ludicrous to them. And in fact, disputes over farm boundaries or trespassing on another's land are almost unknown. The most remarkable proof of this occurred in 1936, when the Hill Talis returned to their ancestral homes after twenty-five years of exile. Several hundred men took possession again of their ancestors' farm plots without a single boundary dispute. If there was doubt about a particular plot the elders were consulted and settled the matter, not by the exercise of authority but by reason of their knowledge of where every member of the clan had farmed in the old days. Boys of thirteen or fourteen know in detail the ownership and boundaries of every farm plot in the settlement, or at any rate in their section, if it is a large settlement.

It should be noted that there is no communal production for communal use of foodstuffs or any other commodities among the Tallensi, and there is, accordingly, no concept of the communal ownership of the farm-lands of the community. A nuclear lineage has indefeasible rights of ownership over its land. No one has an over-right over it, either real or fictitious. This rule applies between clans as well as within the clan. Trespassing on the farm-lands of members of clans other than one's own is unheard of. For, as we have learnt, adjacent clans are interconnected by structural ties. Every clan is a member of a wider community of interdependent clans, emerging at the level of politico-ritual relations and including, at its widest extent, all the Tallensi. This is the *tɛŋ* at its widest extent, symbolically recognized in the Great Festivals and in the chain of interdependent politico-ritual offices held by the heads of all the different maximal lineages and clans. It is the counterpart, in the social structure, of the notion of the Earth in its mystical aspect as a universal power acting on the lives of all men.

Security of land ownership, which means security for every man of the opportunity to supply the basic needs of himself and his dependants, is, therefore, conditional upon the integration of the community; in the first place, of the clan, but also of the wider community of interdependent groups of clans. Its ultimate basis is the politico-ritual organization of the Tallensi.

The Integration of the Community: Chiefship and Tɛndaanaship

The politico-ritual integration of a Tale clan is focused in the politico-ritual office or offices vested in it or in its component maximal lineages.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

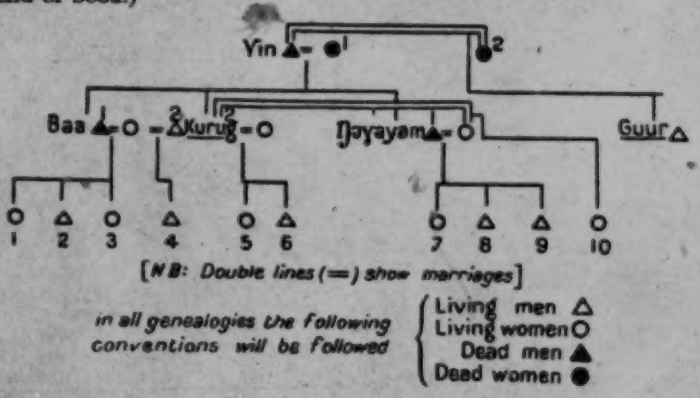
his ritual powers and duties give a tɛndaana very great prestige and considerable moral authority over people living on his *tɛŋ* whether or not they belong to his clan. At Tongo, for instance, the Gbizug tɛndaana is spoken of and treated with a respect little short of reverence, both in the formal interclan politico-ritual relations and in commonplace relations of everyday life. 'He owns the land (*ɔn nɔo tɛŋ la*)', Tongo people say gravely, 'we are strangers here. We only grow our millet here to feed ourselves. If we offend the tɛndaana he can drive us away from here.' The last part of this statement is not literally true. A tɛndaana cannot drive people off their ancestral dwelling and farm-land; to say the least it would be ethically evil. It is not legal but ritual action that the statement implies. I have seen a tɛndaana's curse throw a person into a state of anxiety that persisted for days, until a reconciliation was effected. But this was anxiety concerning the mystical consequences of the tɛndaana's curse, without any assumption as to its jural implications. The term 'owner' applied to a chief or tɛndaana, as we have stated earlier, is simply a means of subsuming in one concept the configuration of rights and duties, privileges and obligations which defines the relations of a community with its politico-ritual heads in reference to its local framework and to the common values symbolized in ritual doctrine and practice. The material earth and the mystical Earth meet in the functions of tɛndaanas.

Many Tallensi are able to formulate the distinction between the earth in its physical, utilitarian aspect and the Earth in its ritual manifestations. But in general the distinction is inherent in the economic and politico-ritual institutions of the natives rather than expressed in explicit doctrine or language. Whenever or wherever the concept *tɛŋ* comes up it tends to be ambiguous. It suggests both aspects of the earth, though the major emphasis may be on one or the other. It is as if neither aspect of the earth can appear without the other following like its shadow.

This holds particularly with the *tɛndaanditib* clans. Their ritual bonds with their *tɛŋ* form a halo around their utilitarian relations with the earth. In most of these clans, therefore, it is a taboo of the Earth to sell parcels of land. To sell farm-land (*kuo*) is like selling pieces of the mystical *tɛŋ* to which they are bound by the strongest ties of interest, emotion, and values. Namoo clans which do not have tɛndaanas do not feel this strong and direct tie with their *tɛŋ* in its mystical aspect. The utilitarian, material aspect of the earth falls apart from its mystical counterpart more easily for them. Hence it is mostly in such communities that farm-land is sold. But even Namoos say that the earth as such, the *tɛŋ*, cannot be sold. In practice the sale of farm-land is a sale of usufructuary rights and is confined to clansmen or kinsmen as we know. It is, always, a transaction between men who are bound to one another by the fundamental common and mutual interests of Tale collective life. Men cannot buy land in a Tale settlement in which they have no kin. In this, as in other aspects of their relationship towards locality, the Namoos put the major emphasis on the coherence of the community as this is focused in the chiefship. And fundamentally the coherence of the community is as indivisible as the continuity of territory. The Chief of Tongo, for example, exercises an ever-present influence on the prosperity and welfare of the members

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

analysis. Yidaan-Yin-Kurug is as convenient a person for this as anybody else. Lean and angular, like most Tale men, with the greying hair of a man past middle age, he occupies homestead No. 6 in Puhug, near the rough track that used to be a Government-made road. He is a man of some substance as wealth goes in Tongo, a section headman[1] (*Kambɔnaaba*) and one of the lesser elders (*Kpɛmtaɣəlis*). But one would have to know the Tallensi very well to detect his status if one saw him in his usual garb of a loin-cloth stiff and greasy with body dirt, and an equally soiled body-cloth. Kurug is an average man of his age in Taleland, an industrious farmer by native standards, a law-abiding citizen, a loyal member of his section and of the settlement. (Cf. following genealogical chart and map at end of book.)



The unit of interest to us here includes: Kurug, the head (*kpeem*), his younger brother (*pit*) Guur, more strictly described as his *nunɔ* (half-brother), his own children (*biis*), Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 10; his deceased older full-brother (*bier-soog*) Baa's children, Nos. 1, 2, 3; his deceased younger full-brother (*pit-soog*) Ŋɔɣayam's children, Nos. 7, 8, 9. He describes these children of his dead brothers as his children (*biis*), and they speak of him as their father (*ba*). Except for two of the girls, who are married and therefore away from home, all the other children live under Kurug's roof and authority. His *pit*, Guur, is away too, in Mampurugu, where he went to live a few years ago.

This lineage is typical of what we may call the effective minimal lineage, that is, the lineage of the smallest span which emerges as a corporate unit in economic, jural, and ritual activities and is differentiated from other units of a like sort. It is not, it should be noted, an amorphous, internally undifferentiated unit; differences of generation, age, and maternal origin regulate the relations between its members. What is more important, the

[1] These headmen are an innovation due to the British Administration. They are appointed by chiefs and other heads of clans or locally associated groups of clans to assist them in carrying out the tasks demanded by the Administration. Before 1933 a headman's position gave him many opportunities of enriching himself by extortion.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

613 Tallensi say that lineage headship is conferred by inheritance of, or succession to (the same term, *vaa*, vb. is used for both), firstly, the custody of the founding ancestor's shrine (*bɔyar*), and secondly the patrimonial property (*faar*), in particular the home farm (*saman*) of the lineage. Within the nuclear lineage, or at most the inner lineage, both conditions apply; beyond that limit lineage headship does not confer title to land, except in a few special cases; it is determined solely by succession to the custody of the *bɔyar*. The rules of inheritance and succession are backed by the most powerful sanctions of the ancestor cult and supported by the whole fabric of the social system. Within the medial lineage inheritance disputes occur so rarely as to be negligible. This is a reflection of the strong solidarity of this unit, and of the recognition of classificatory fatherhood within it. Beyond that range succession disputes are settled either by the arbitration of the maximal lineage head or by an appeal to the ancestors through divination or an oracle test.

613 ●577 The range of application of the two conditions of *kpɛmɔt* define the gradation of powers and functions discharged by lineage heads. Within the nuclear (or at most inner) lineage the head has paternal authority[1] associated with his control of the farm-land and of the labour of his dependants. He has corresponding jural and ritual responsibilities for the junior members of the lineage. Formally, his is the decisive voice in all matters in which the lineage emerges as a corporate unit—for example, in the disposal of the daughters in marriage and in the payment of bride-price for sons' wives. Beyond the nuclear lineage the lineage head's powers and authority are purely moral and ritual. He cannot, for instance, command the services of any member of the lineage (outside his nuclear lineage) as of right, nor is he responsible for any of them in such matters as bride-price payments. And the degree to which he commands the loyalty of his lineage co-members depends considerably on his personality. They will always support him unhesitatingly where the common interests of the lineage are concerned, but they might not, in private matters, treat him with the confidence due to his status if he lacks tact or tries to be dictatorial. A lineage head represents the lineage. He is the pivot of its corporate unity. Everything he does as lineage head is for and on behalf of the lineage. Hence he never takes action in corporate affairs without consulting and obtaining the consent of the heads of all the component segments of the lineage. In fact a lineage head very rarely takes action in corporate matters without the presence of all the senior male members of the lineage. Thus it is common for the initiative and drive in corporate activities to come from younger men of intelligence and forceful personality, though they are carried out by, or in the name of, the lineage head. This is especially the case when, as often happens, lineage heads are old and infirm. Tinta'alam's senility did not diminish the respect and affection in which he was held by all the people

[413] him land to dwell on and therefore I am his superior' he must not be taken literally. He is referring to a tradition of settlement going back to the founding ancestors of their lineages.

[1] We analyse the function of classificatory fatherhood and of paternal authority in the lineage more fully in the second volume of this study.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of Tɔŋ-Kuorəg. The practical duties of his office were carried out by his sons and other elders of the section. The decrepitude of age does not make a chief or tɛndaana any the less a chief or tɛndaana. The activities of the office are simply taken over by his sons.

Tallensi never undertake anything of importance,—for instance, a marriage transaction or the building of a new shrine or making a new bush farm—without the knowledge of the other members of the medial lineage and without consulting or at least informing the head of their section or maximal lineage. The home of the lineage head is the centre of the social life of the lineage members and their families. There is a constant coming and going of members of the lineage at the lineage head's homestead. There they often congregate in the dry season to gossip or discuss their affairs under his shade tree. Visiting kinsmen and affines of lineage members from other clans usually call to greet him there. This applies especially to the medial lineage but also to maximal lineages and sections in a slightly lesser degree. The lineage head himself, if he is able-bodied, often goes to see other members of the lineage. The bonds of solidarity, mutual interest, and knowledge of one another's affairs are thus constantly being knit together within the lineage.

Though a lineage head has no judicial authority, he is often asked to arbitrate in disputes or conflicts between segments of the lineage. What he generally tries to do is to bring about a compromise and reconciliation, for he has no powers of enforcing his decision. When he is successful in adjusting differences, it is on account of his prestige and because he has the public opinion of the lineage on his side. No lineage head would attempt to adjust a dispute in the lineage without the advice and backing of the other elders of the lineage.

The sanction of a lineage head's position is the ancestor cult. Even a chief has, in the native social order, no judicial or economic sanctions to support his authority. A tɛndaana has, in addition, the sanction of the Earth. The role of the lineage head in corporate affairs, his duties, responsibilities, and privileges all arise from the fact that he has custody of the lineage *bɔyar*. The strength of this sanction depends not only on the natives' belief in the mystical powers of the ancestors but also on the crucial function of the ancestor cult as the ideology around which lineage relations are organized. The cult of the lineage ancestors is the supreme centripetal force in lineage relations. Many men live far away from their lineage homes. They maintain their lineage bonds on account of their dependence on the ancestor cult. Individuals may transgress the norms of lineage unity and amity with apparent impunity. Their death, when it comes, is conceptualized as a punishment from the ancestors and this serves to reaffirm the norms of lineage solidarity.

Because of this, sacrifices to the lineage *bɔyar* form the key mechanism for maintaining lineage cohesion and affirming the status of the lineage head. The first of these sacrifices made by a new lineage head (in a lineage of a high order) when he formally takes over the custody of the *bɔyar* is of outstanding significance. Not less than three or four and sometimes ten to fifteen years elapse between successive ceremonies of this sort. They are occasions of special solemnity marking the re-establishment of

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

621 framework in politically centralized societies. Tale political relations are
182 dominated by the facts of genealogical connexion on the one hand, and by the bonds of ritual interdependence on the other.

Looking only at the macroscopic structure of Tale society, therefore, we realize that it is a very complicated mosaic in which every tie between corporate units is counterbalanced by cleavages between them, all loyalties between corporate units are kept within bounds by loyalties towards other units, and all common interests are set off by divergent interests. The Tallensi provide an interesting example of a society in which there is a very strong tendency towards a general equilibrium in the collective life. What we have called Tale society is a social region demarcated by the range of the dynamic equilibrium that prevails within it. Non-Tale means simply outside this equilibrium; or rather, to be precise, it means on and beyond the circumference of this equilibrium. This is the essential difference between societies like the Tallensi and those that derive their unity from defined territorial boundaries and subjection to a common, all-powerful government. That does not mean that a segmentary social structure and a pyramidal social structure are necessarily mutually exclusive. It is quite possible for the subdivisions of a centralized state to have a segmentary social organization.

Re-examination of the Major Cleavage: Warfare

621 Through this mosaic, however, runs a major cleavage of great significance, as we have learnt. It is most conspicuous in the Tongo area. For this there may be historical reasons, but we have no means of discovering them. What is beyond question is that this fact is a fundamental feature of the existing structure of the society. Tongo is the most important centre of Namoo settlement; the Tong Hills area is the pivot of the ritual cults and values which play so dominant a part in Tale political relations. In consequence, the cleavage upon which the whole politico-ritual system hinges is most conspicuous there.

173 When Tallensi discuss the cleavage between Namoos and non-Namoos,
184 they often hark back to the wars of former days. There are still old men living who took part in the last of those wars, and many middle-aged men and women tell tales of the fighting they saw as children or
[535] heard of from their parents; these wars are also a common theme of funeral dirges.

●577 But the Tallensi are not one of those warlike African peoples who have
[511] a hypnotic effect even on anthropologists. Like most peasants who wring a bare subsistence from the soil, they have much too prosaic an
173 attachment to their homes, their families, and their farms, and much too
721 lively an appreciation of the perils of commonplace living to overrate the warrior. Not that Tallensi are lacking in physical courage or combativeness. They are quick to resent a trespass on their rights and readily snatch up a weapon or missile if they are provoked. In the old days a fearless and successful fighter (*zai*, pl. *za'ab*) was admired. The deeds of some of these great fighters of old are still recounted with pride. To kill an enemy in war was something to boast of. It was a mark of manliness as well as an important service to the clan. But there was a dark side

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

to it; and nowadays the natives lay more stress on this than on the ancient glory of success in war. There was the mystical danger of reprisals from the spirit of one's victim (*gil*) following one all one's life. There was the hate created in the dead man's kin, agnates and extra-clan kin, including probably some of one's own clansmen or clansmen's wives. At best they might try to injure one by means of bad medicine; at worst it meant that one could never take part in a sacrifice or meal in which they shared. If one did, their hidden hatred had a mystical power to kill one. Nor did a man who had excelled in war derive any social, economic, or political advantage from it. It did not add to his wealth or give him more influence in the councils of the community. Soon even the fame of his prowess became dim, for it is bad form to talk publicly, during his lifetime, about the deeds of a man who has slain an enemy. It 'whitens (*pcləg*)' him—that is, exposes him to the wrath of his victim's spirit which resents public comment on his defeat. A great fighter is praised in dirges and speeches after his death. But in the past, as now, it was the good farmer and not the bold fighter who was held up as the ideal of a worthwhile life.

Tallensi speak of fighting with weapons, for whatever reason, as one of the necessary evils of the old days. They look back without regrets on the passing of warfare. They regard the shedding of human blood, even in self-defence or in justifiable anger, as sinful. To kill a man in war was not homicide; one did not have to make heavy expiatory sacrifices to the Earth for it, yet one could never get rid of the blood taint (*ziem*). In 1936 two of the oldest men I knew died. There was much whispered talk about them. People pointed out that they had died in utter penury, lacking even a sheep for their grave-clout. Yet at different times in their long lives they had owned many cattle and had had several wives. Worse still, they had died leaving only one or two young children, the survivors of large families. Their lives had been tragically futile, by Tale standards. And why? Because they had both been redoubtable fighters in their young days; they had killed men in war; and this was the nemesis. All the animals they had sacrificed in expiation had been in vain, in the long run.

The most heinous sin of all was to instigate (*sa*) a war. It did not matter if the man had justice on his side. In the long run he paid for his sin with sickness and death, and the tale of misfortune might follow his descendants in the male line for generations. When Siiyelib died, the diviner consulted to find out the cause of his death revealed an unexampled story of misfortune going back twenty-five years. One after another, Siiyelib's wives and children had died; rinderpest had wiped out his cattle; and at last he himself had died without a son to mourn him and in extreme poverty. All this went back to his part in the Tong Hills Expedition of 1910–11, of which, the natives believe, he had been one of the prime instigators.

Before the arrival of the British the Tallensi, in common with their neighbours, had no judicial system. This was in keeping with their lack of a centralized form of government. As far as there was a 'rule of law'—that is, general observance of rights and obligations in property relations, in person-to-person relations, in intra- and inter-group relations subject

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

his quarrel with the chief of his clan. The diviner added that the ancestors demanded that Gbalɔg should be exhumed and re-buried at Tongo among his forefathers. This meant that Gbalɔg's sons should beg the Chief of Tongo's pardon and offer expiatory sacrifices to the clan ancestors. But Gbalɔg's second son, who had lived with him, scornfully refused to do this, and added the further sin of withholding from his older brother Naŋgbeog, the legitimate heir, the property their father had left. There was scathing criticism of his behaviour at Tongo but nothing could be done about it. There are no jural sanctions compelling a man to abide by custom in cases of this kind; and as the Tallensi often say, men do not fear to defy even the ancestor spirits, when their property or power is at stake.

But shortly afterwards the second son suddenly became ill and died. At once everybody drew the obvious moral: he had incurred the wrath of the ancestors for his double sin. And when the cause of his death was sought by divination public opinion was confirmed. Naŋgbeog, now the recognized heir, at once got some elders to plead with the chief on his behalf and the curse was withdrawn. Naŋgbeog gave a young bull and several small stock to be sacrificed to the clan ancestors in expiation of his father's sin. Since representatives of all branches of the clan have to be present at such sacrifices, this was equivalent to a ritual reconciliation. Naŋgbeog then exhumed and re-buried the bodies of his father and brother at Tongo. He brought home the live-stock and personal effects he had inherited from his father as well as the widows and children of whom he was now the proper guardian. Gbalɔg's defection was thus erased and his line wholly reunited to the parent stem.

Lineage solidarity, which in its widest extent passes over into clan solidarity, has great practical utility for the natives. But this is not the source of its strength and binding force. Their roots lie in the moral premisses of Tale society; the ideas of right and duty, in the idiom of Tale culture, are the formative elements in the sentiment and the display of lineage solidarity. The starting-point is the fundamental moral axiom of Tale social organization, the axiom that kinship is binding in its own right.[1] And the supreme sanction of lineage solidarity is, as we have seen, the ancestor cult, which is, for the natives, the objective, cultural embodiment of the social conscience.

This is evident not only from the preceding analysis but from a consideration of the rights and restrictions associated with lineage membership. There is the whole complex of rights, obligations, and prohibitions centred in the wives of the lineage members. Underlying it is the identification of lineage members with one another in virtue of their common agnatic descent. The right to inherit a clansman's wife is the correlative of the prohibition against adultery with a clansman's wife. Both rules spring from the notion of the social equivalence of siblings and from the common interest of the clan in the children of the clan. These are not matters of collective property rights but of moral norms. This is clear from the sanction against adultery with a clansman's wife, the belief that the adulterer is mystically dangerous to the injured husband if the latter gets ill.

[1] This subject is fully discussed in *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

A striking illustration of this antithesis occurred at a sacrifice that Diŋkaha made to one of his ancestors. An ambitious and none too scrupulous braggart of considerable intelligence and drive, Diŋkaha had been very useful to me and had made the most of his connexion with me. One of the objects of this ceremony was to show off his friendship with me to his clansmen, and his prestige among them to me. It was, therefore, a specially lavish occasion. In the middle of the ceremony Diŋkaha's father-in-law called in. The old man was respectfully received and ushered into his daughter's rooms. Diŋkaha finished the sacrifice and began to distribute the meat. Various members of his lineage and clan received the portions due to them. And then, intoxicated with conceit at having his white friend in his house and at the obvious appreciation of his stock, in consequence, in the eyes of his clansmen, a rash impulse overcame him. Holding up a goat's foreleg—one of the ritually prescribed portions that should be reserved for those entitled by birth to share in the sacrifice—he launched out into a speech, the gist of which was that he desired his father-in-law to accept it in order to mark this special occasion. A sombre look came upon the old man's face. He was visibly shocked. Speaking gravely but curtly, he refused the gift. *Deenam*, he said, do not sacrifice together; it is an unheard-of thing; he could not accept the gift. Diŋkaha retired in discomfiture behind a smoke-screen of apologies.

Marriage implies the absence of kinship ties between the parties; kinship, the impossibility of marriage. Kinship ties exist in their own right; *deen* is an artificial alliance of a contractual nature. The parties to a marriage deliberately and voluntarily enter into a bond, the bride's guardian permitting her to marry in return for a promise on the part of the bridegroom's guardian to pay him four head of cattle. Kinship ties are not voluntary and are automatically binding. The parties to a marriage are bound by rights and duties which did not exist before. Kinship automatically entails moral, jural, and ritual bonds, whereas there is an avowed element of mutual coercion, and therefore potential tension, in the relations of in-laws. They rely upon a special, impartial jural instrument, the bride-price, for the adjustment of their rival claims on the woman.

Tallensi think of *deen* as a relationship for ever fraught with the possibility of conflict over these claims. Nearly all their litigation nowadays, like much inter-clan fighting in former days, concerns bride-price debts or the rival claims over a woman or her children of father-in-law and son-in-law. Such quarrels are incompatible with kinship. They would cut to pieces the solidarity of kinsfolk—that is why, say the Tallensi, kinsfolk do not marry. *Dɔyam*, in short, presupposes some degree of identification of the parties concerned, mutual or common interests, and especially a bond of amity that excludes strife which might fix a permanent gulf between them.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

These norms of kinship the Tallensi regard as axiomatic, one might say as the *a priori* moral premisses of their social behaviour. Behind the utility of kinship in practical life and the jural and ritual sanctions that buttress kinship ties stands the notion of kinship as the rock-bottom category of social relations, inviolable in its own right. The root of this notion lies in the bond between parent and child and it reflects the fact that genealogical relationship is the binding medium of Tale social structure. The Tallensi are outspoken sceptics about human nature. They take it for granted that the ideal norms of kinship will often be violated. They know well, however, that they are usually effective and cannot be destroyed by the transgressions of individuals; for these, in the end, always bring their own revenge and are compensated for in the total flow of collective life. In any case, the lapses of individuals, and the fact that strong sanctions exist to check them, do not diminish the absolute, *a priori* character of kinship.

It is worth noting that economic reciprocity—which is a conspicuous element in kinship, especially among close kin—and jural rights and duties have a much less direct connexion with this fundamental assumption of kinship than religious bonds have. This is connected with the important place of ancestor worship in Tale society. To trace genealogical relationship it is necessary to recollect common ancestors; and if these have religious value, ritual allegiance to a common ancestor or ancestress inevitably forms an intrinsic feature of kinship ties and their most powerful sanction. The more distant a genealogical tie is, the more does it become a matter of moral and ritual, rather than of jural or economic, relations. We shall see this in more detail when we come to compare social relations within the domestic family with the relations of kinship outside the domestic family.

Two Classes of Kinship Relations

Any relation of kinship belongs to one of two classes. If people say 'We are *dɔŋam*', the basic analogy they have in mind is that of siblings. Two men who are cognatically related to the same lineage—e.g. two men who have a common maternal uncle's lineage (*ahəb yir*) or whose fathers or grandfathers had a common maternal uncle's lineage—describe themselves thus. They visualize their relationship primarily as one of common though independent religious allegiance to a particular line of common ancestors, in sacrifices to whom they may both partake. By the operation of the lineage principle two lineages might consider themselves to be related in such a manner. Kɔnbamɛŋ and Pudiniba, two young men of the same clan but of different sections of the clan, were good friends. When I asked them how their friendship had arisen, they resorted, characteristically, to the idiom of kinship. Being members of the same clan is not a sufficient reason for so personal a relationship as friendship. The reason they adduced was that they were both sister's

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

His family had had a windfall of two daughters in half a generation and that meant eight cows.

Yet the Tallensi believe emphatically that a girl can only realize her womanhood to the full by bearing legitimate children. For this she must marry; and marriage means having only one husband at a time. It is as her husband's sexual mate that a woman is most sharply separated from her natal family; it is her husband's exclusive rights over her reproductive powers that definitively makes them husband and wife.

This proposition applies also to the husband's field of social relations. Within the region of family and kinship ties where generation differences are socially recognized, sexual relations may occur only between married partners. Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman of the family who is not his wife is incest. The Tallensi have no name for this act. They say, simply, 'It is tabooed (*de kihme*)'; and they look on it with unanimous revulsion. Translating their ideas into our cultural idiom, we should say that they regard any form of incest as an unnatural act.[1]

Incest, to a Talena, includes sex relations with a sister or daughter, that is, a woman of one's own lineage: with a mother, the wife of one's own or classificatory father; with a brother's wife; and with a son's wife. Such acts of misconduct are considered incestuous if they occur within the limits of the expanded family—that is, the family group based on the inner lineage (the narrow *dug*). The natives stress this, putting the emphasis on the fact that the narrow *dug* is the smallest lineage segment with a common ancestor shrine (*bɔŋar*). Such acts are, also, often regarded as incestuous within the limits of the family cluster based on the medial lineage, particularly if this lineage has a narrow span.

Incest occurs occasionally in every Tale community. Such an act soon leaks out, and is remembered with contempt for many years. I have discussed such cases with many informants, and was able, also, to witness the public reaction to two cases that occurred during my field work.[2]

There are no penal sanctions against any form of incest, nor are the culprits believed to be subject to automatic mystical retribution. Incest is so incompatible with the pattern of co-operation and the structure of disciplinary and affective relations in the family that this itself serves to banish it from the field of family relationships. Though incest taboos are never deliberately inculcated, the habits, attitudes, and organization of family life (to put the native expressions into sociological language) create internal barriers against incest, in the normal person. This applies particularly to incest with a sister or daughter, whether it is a single impulsive act or a more lasting liaison. Tallensi explain that a normal

[1] A preliminary analysis of this subject was given in my paper, 'Kinship, Incest, and Exogamy in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', in *Custom is King: Essays presented to R. R. Marett*, 1936.

[2] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

684 577 man does not even have sexual desire for a sister or a daughter. This is the standard, conscious, sexual attitude to a sister and it is in keeping with the conscious attitude about incest with a sister or daughter. Such an act is spoken of as tabooed (*kih*), but it is neither a crime nor a sin. It is simply despicable conduct that the culprits ought to be ashamed of as unworthy of grown persons. Even children talk of copulation with a sibling as something beneath contempt, though, in fact, it is common knowledge that up to the age of about 8 or 9 boys often try to have sexual intercourse with a small girl playmate in their play and for the most part playmates are close lineage siblings. Adults reprove the children if they discover them in this kind of play, but dismiss it as due to childish irresponsibility.[1] This, indeed, is the essence of the general attitude towards incest with a sister or daughter. It is disreputable, because it does not conform to the accepted standards of responsible adult conduct. Only in the case of incest with a full (*soog*) sister is there a feeling of horror. It is felt to be unlucky in a vague way. She is the person of the opposite sex with whom a man is most fully identified. What is more important, she perpetuates their mother's uterine line and therefore stands for the indestructibility of the unique bond between mother and child. Sexual intercourse with her would be almost like incest with one's own mother; and this feeling is extended to distant female uterine kin (*saarət*) as well.

Incest with a mother, a brother's wife, or a daughter-in-law is in a different class of reprehensible acts. It is a taboo for a man even to sit on the sleeping-mat of a woman related to him in any of these ways (and thus, we may presume, symbolically betraying a wish to seduce her). To have intercourse with her is a very grievous sin. It is utterly repugnant to Tale morality.

684 577 539 Incest with one's own mother the natives regard as a thing of such monstrous iniquity that it is ridiculous to conceive of anyone who is not mentally deranged committing it. Incest with a father's wife, other than one's own mother, or a brother's or son's wife is almost as heinous a sin and is regarded with little less horror; but it is known to happen sometimes. In one of the cases that occurred during my stay in Taleland, a man raped his father's elderly wife (his own dead mother's co-wife), whom he called '*ma-pit* (younger mother)'; in the other, a notoriously dissolute young man seduced his father's brother's wife, whom he would [626 533] also describe as '*ma-pit*'. Both were publicly derided in the songs sung during the dances of the Great Festivals. One of the songs about the second man went as follows:

> Badiemaal (his name) you who rape vaginas, Oh!
> Bakyɛlbanɔya (the woman) is a slut.
> Zimbil-Badiemaal is a dog.

[1] Cf. my *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, Memorandum XVII, International African Institute, 1938.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

684 Badiemaal, is this how you behave?
Zimbil-Badiemaal will never inherit the (lineage) *bɔyar*;
●577 Why did you copulate with Naaho's wife?

539 *Badiemaal, pɛnzierug, woo-oo!*
Bakyɛlbanɔya a bumbarəŋ.
Zimbil-Badiemaal, u a baa.

Badiemaal, i cɲa ŋwala?
Zimbil-Badiemaal ku vaa bɔyar;
I nyɛb Naah pɔya bo?

It was widely held that both of these men would take the first opportunity to get out of Taleland.

613 The Tallensi explain that such acts are so severely reprobated because
684 they cause deep and irreconcilable 'enmity' (*diuŋ*) between father and
577 son, brother and brother, and this is a mortal blow to the solidarity of the family and the lineage. They arouse the wrath of the ancestors. If the injured father, brother, or son does not bring the matter up before the elders of his medial lineage or maximal lineage, he will be struck down by the ancestors. If he does, he must be ritually reconciled with his offending son, brother, or father. But in spite of such a formal reconciliation, 'the enmity remains within'. The sinner will never be able to offer sacrifice to his injured father with a clear conscience, or an injured son to the spirit of his father who so grievously sinned and offended him; nor may two brothers between whom this bitter inner discord prevails sacrifice together. Therefore, as the scornful song about Badiemaal declares, the sinner cannot, with a clear conscience, inherit the shrines common to the lineage; and since a man's sins spiritually taint his children and children's children, the sinner's whole line of agnatic descendants will be virtually outcast from the moral unity of the lineage, even if they are allowed to participate formally in the cult of its ancestors. Again, a man who has seduced his brother's wife cannot inherit her after his death, for he has broken the bond of brotherhood. The incestuous sexual act is sinful because it disrupts the moral relationship of father and son or brother and brother, and thus undermines the solidarity of the lineage at its core. There is a magical deterrent as well, which reflects this. If two men have sexual relations with the same woman and one of them gets ill, the other may not see him; it would cause him to sink and perhaps die; and to shun a sick parent, sibling, or child is the very negation of family solidarity.

593 A man's 'fathers', 'brothers', and 'sons' within the limits of the nuclear
613 lineage are the men who have the most direct interest in his wife, especially in her reproductive powers. They will all be concerned in, and one or other of them will be responsible for, the payment of her bride-price. His children mean almost as much to them as to him. They

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

593 613 [587] replenish the lineage. They are under the ritual and jural authority of his own or proxy father, during the latter's lifetime, and may pass into the ritual and jural custody of one of his 'brothers' on his death. If he dies, a 'brother' will have the first and strongest claim to his widow's hand. Yet these are the men who must most rigorously respect his exclusive sexual rights over his wife and most staunchly defend them against all others. Men of the same nuclear lineage can substitute for one another in all relationships of filiation; for these are the relationships that constitute them a corporate unit. They dare not usurp one another's role in the marital relationship; this would bring them into competition with one another. The sexual bond is the heart of the unique person-to-person aspect of marriage, and sexual competition the negation of the tie of common descent and the greatest source of inter-personal and inter-group conflict. Lineage and clan have a corporate interest in a wife of any member of the unit as the mother of future members of the group, and in her offspring. But no member of the unit may have a personal sexual interest in her while her husband is alive.

613 835 ●577 We can see, now, why sexual relations with a sister or a daughter are so much less reprehensible than incest with a wife of the lineage. Incest with a sister or daughter does not destroy the solidarity of the males of the nuclear lineage for it does not imply rivalry between them. She belongs to all of them equally by birth; she is genealogically and socially identified with them; she and they already have defined rights and duties and sentiments of attachment to one another; as a member of the lineage, she has as great an interest in their solidarity as they have and the physical replenishment and perpetuation of the lineage is of as much concern to her as to them. In relation to her lineage siblings, sexual gratification as a source of pleasure is distinguished from the reproductive function. In terms of the latter she is identified with the lineage as a whole. The common interest a woman's agnates have in her as a woman is in her reproductive powers being placed at the service of another genealogical group in return for the bride-price, and not, as in the case of a wife, in her reproductive powers serving the interests of their own group.[1] If a man desires his sister or daughter sexually it must be a matter of mere lust (*kərih*), a foolish impulse, and not an expression of his desire for progeny as a socially mature adult. The gratification of lust, contemptible as it is in these circumstances, does not shatter the moral unity or injure the common interests of the lineage as does the usurpation of procreative rights over a wife. It does not, like the latter, destroy a father's authority over his son or a son's filial piety towards his father; for though it is a perversion of the social role of father or brother, it is not a usurpation of critical rights.

835 613 What has been said of the nuclear lineage applies in only slightly lesser degree to the inner lineage—the widest corporate unit responsibly

[1] Cf. p. 250 below.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

837 684 613 577

By contrast, sex relations with the wife of a member of the same lineage or clan outside the range of the inner lineage is a wrong. It is not incest, but the most reprehensible form of adultery. It does not bear the same moral stigma as the corresponding form of incest, nor does it carry religious penalties for the adulterer. Unless the two men concerned have personal cognatic ties, which makes the offence more serious, they are related to each other only as members of related lineage segments. Their personal identity is submerged in the corporate unit, and the offence is interpreted as an injury to the husband's segment by the culprit's segment of a like order. What is a moral and ritual offence in the inner lineage shades over into a misdemeanour or jural injury in the wider lineage. The shift of evaluation is correlated with a change in the intensity though not in the kind of interests involved, and a widening of the span of the unit. The wider lineage has similar but less direct interests in a man's wife than his inner lineage; its unity and solidarity are of the same order as, but less intimate than that of the inner lineage. It has a jural and political unity and solidarity, primarily associated with formal sentiments of amity and mutual loyalty; whereas the cohesion of the inner lineage (based as it is on common economic interests, co-operation and consultation in the everyday affairs of life, contiguous residence, and minimal internal segmentation for jural purposes such as marriage arrangements with other lineages) is primarily moral, and associated with strong emotions of person-to-person amity and loyalty. Thus, beyond the range of the inner lineage, when the customary ritual reconciliation between the segment of the adulterer and the segment of the husband has been completed, the matter is over and done with so far as the public relations of the parties are concerned. No material compensation is made to the husband, and, in the absence of a judicial system, there is no one who can inflict a penalty on the adulterer. The wronged husband may harbour resentment against his wife's seducer; the magical danger inherent in their seeing each other if either is ill remains as a barrier between them; but the corporate unity of the lineage and clan to which they both belong is restored.

Still, adultery with the wife of a clansman or of a member of a linked maximal lineage[1] (to which the same rules apply) creates dissension in the corporate body. It violates the principle that all men of the clan have a formally equal interest in the wife of a fellow member. It leaves behind rankling animosity that hinders united action. For these reasons it usually arouses an outburst of anger against the wrongdoer. Public opinion is a strong sanction against it therefore. Though cases are far from common, they occur more frequently than the corresponding form of incest. I was able to obtain details of a few cases that occurred immediately before and during my stay in Taleland. In one case the husband and his brothers were so outraged that they fell upon the offender in his

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[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vi.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

homestead, thrashed him soundly, and destroyed many of his personal belongings. This is typical of the anger stirred up by adultery within the clan. Such action would not be taken against a man who committed incest with a father's or brother's wife, though he might be sent to Coventry for a time. For this kind of incest is, at bottom, a question of conscience. The public reaction with regard to it is of no consequence compared with the vileness of the sin and the wrath of the ancestors.

If a man's wife is seduced by a member of another clan, this is also adultery, as has been mentioned, and a wrong against the husband's clan. If the two clans have local or structural ties, the breach must be mended by the prescribed ritual reconciliation. If they have no such ties, no redress is available to the injured husband's clan. He and his clansmen will try to 'cancel the debt (*lɛrəg samər*)' by seducing the wife of a member of the clan that has wronged him, when any of them gets a chance of doing so.

A man's exclusive sexual rights over his wife are secured, also, by mystical sanctions to which the woman is subject. If she has sexual relations with any man other than her husband she commits a grave sin. It is, as the natives say, 'dirt' (*dayət*), mystical defilement. It may bring sickness or death on the woman's husband or children or even on herslf, for it is a serious affront to her husband's ancestors. As we have noted before, adultery (*pɔŋamboɔn*, lit. woman-thing) in a wife is regarded with revulsion not unmixed with real dread. The woman has committed something not far short of sacrilege, for she has flouted the rights of her husband's lineage over her reproductive powers. Hence she cannot be admitted to his home again until she confesses before the shrine of the lineage ancestors, the symbolic incarnation of the lineage itself. The threat to the life of the lineage is felt to be so grave that among the Hill Talis an adulteress is forced to confess at the External Bəyar,[1] the supreme ancestor shrine. Men do not hesitate to use the most callous third-degree methods, short of physical maltreatment, to exact a confession from a wayward wife.

Lastly, a man's wife continues to belong to him sexually after his death until his final funeral ceremonies have been made. Apart from a few ritual observances in sign of mourning, which do not embarrass her greatly, a widow is free to go about her normal life in the interval between her husband's death and his final obsequies. But she is subject to one iron taboo: she may not have sexual relations. It is a much graver sin than during her husband's lifetime, endangering not only her children and herself but her husband's spiritual status. A dead man whose wife has *kaa gaba*, broken the mourning of widowhood, as this misdemeanour is called, cannot have descendants given to him as spiritual wards, for his spiritual status is smirched. It is for this reason that, when

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vii.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

thus; and besides, people would say he was mean. This attitude does not occur with the true reciprocity that prevails in the domestic family or between near kin.

Sex in the Relationship of Affines

While, therefore, the relations of affines assume the existence of a formal distance between them, they are not encumbered by avoidances or other social barriers that make friendliness impossible or ordinary social intercourse a burden. There is amity as well as opposition in their relationship. In one matter only is there a rigorous barrier between affines. In respect to sex and procreation they are strictly separate. The emphasis is on the deed, not the word; there is no prohibition against talking to or in the presence of an affine about sexual matters.

One aspect of this ban on bringing sex into the relationship of affinity is the native attitude about a sexual offence against an affine. For a man to seduce the wife of an affine is almost as heinous a transgression as intercourse with the wife of a man of one's own expanded family, though it is not regarded as incest; and the offence is nearly as bad if the culprit is a close agnate of the woman's husband's affine or the woman the wife of a close agnate of the affine concerned. It is a grave offence, also, if a man or his close agnate abducts the wife of an affine or his close agnate. There are no explicit mystical sanctions against either of these wrongs, but Tallensi describe them as 'a thing of enormous evil (*yelbiog tenta'ar*)' bound to bring ill fortune on the wrongdoer, and in any case involving such serious social consequences that no man in his senses would descend to them. They think of the possible culprit as being the son-in-law, and they say that the father-in-law would take away his daughter and the bride-price be forfeited. Affines are bound to fall out with one another now and then. Usually apologies proffered through an intermediary lead to their making it up again. But in the case of a sexual offence against a father-in-law, it is quite impossible to beg or receive pardon. For it is a sin; it 'pollutes the room (*sayam dug*)' of the injured man.[1]

'Pollution of the room' in this sense is very rare among the Tallensi. But it is not unknown for a man to abduct the wife of the father- or brother-in-law (true or classificatory) of one of his own clansmen. The elders of both the abductor's medial lineage and the wronged husband's medial lineage are then extremely indignant. The latter demand the return of 'their' wife; and in all the cases I have come across the former see to it at once that the woman is sent back to her husband.

[1] Cf. p. 28 above. *Sayam dug* has the double sense of a mystical defilement of the sleeping-room—the inner sanctuary of family and of reproductive life—and of an irreparable infringement of lineage rights. If the offender is a distant clansman of the true son-in-law, a ritual reconciliation between the two lineages might be allowed after the defilement has been ritually removed.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 It is base to seduce an affine's wife, or the wife of his near clansman,
602 anywhere, but it is abominable to do it at the injured man's own house.
837 Strictly speaking, 'polluting the room' refers to the seduction of a father-
in-law's wife, or the wife of his close agnate, at his house or in his settle-
ment. If a man's father-in-law or one of the latter's close agnates seduces
his son-in-law's wife (of another clan than theirs), or the wife of one
of his close agnates, it is generally treated as a particularly reprehensible
case of adultery. The son-in-law would not, for example, necessarily
divorce his wife on that account. A ritual reconciliation will be made and
the matter closed. Tallensi say such offences are extremely rare, and I
have never heard of a case.

835 The offence borders on a sin if it is committed by a son-in-law or
606 someone genealogically identified with him, on the one hand because of
837 his quasi-filial relationship with his father-in-law through his wife, and
577 on the other because of the sex barrier between affines. The striking
thing is that it is a particularly heinous case of 'polluting the room' of a
father-in-law for the son-in-law to have sexual relations with his own
wife at her father's house. The bond which most closely unites a married
couple is the relationship that cuts the woman off most completely from
her filial relationship with her paternal family. As we have noted before,
if her husband has sexual relations with her in her father's house her
status as wife and mother is confounded with her status as sister and
daughter; her husband's status as son-in-law is confounded with his
status as father and husband in his own family. If the husband did not
abrogate his marital rights at his wife's father's house, an insoluble con-
flict would arise both on the jural level and in their emotional relations.
So strict is this taboo that it extends to any man of the son-in-law's
lineage, and any daughter of the father-in-law's lineage, more particu-
[576] larly within the limits of the medial lineage. A man may not even meet
his wife face to face on the path leading from her parental home to his,
if she is on her way from her parents' house to her husband's; for this
would symbolize a wish to treat her as his wife at her father's house.

783 An accidental breach of this symbolic taboo can be mended, though
834 not without difficulty, by a ritual reconciliation. A breach of the pro-
hibition against sexual relations between husband and wife at the latter's
paternal home (and *yir*, home, in this context includes the whole settle-
ment), or the equivalent offence committed by a close agnate of the
husband, is irreparable. The marriage must be broken up, and children
borne of it may be taken away by the woman's father. If this is not done,
disaster would fall on everybody concerned. The bride-price is forfeited
by the offending husband.

584 Opportunities and temptations to break these taboos often occur, for
574 instance when a young man takes a party of his clansmen to spend a few
834 days with his father-in-law in order to help him with some work. A
man's wife generally accompanies him on such occasions. The visitors

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

dies childless, and that children are the greatest source of joy and pride, comfort and support that anybody can have. The Tallensi are much like ourselves in this matter and do not think there is any inconsistency between these two aspects of parenthood. Their whole philosophy of life is like that. Realists as they are, they take it for granted that life has many risks and troubles, but, as they often put it, 'Does anybody desire death on that account?' When I told them that Europeans often refrain deliberately from having children, they were either sceptical or appalled.

The Parent–Child Bond as an Absolute Bond

Tallensi say that the bonds between parent and child can never be obliterated and may not be repudiated. This is a fundamental moral principle and it goes back to the notion that bearing or begetting children is hard. From it follows the duty of filial piety.

You cannot disown your child. 'Even if your child is a good-for-nothing, you have no alternative but to keep him,' said Lɔyani, one of the most intelligent and upright men I knew. 'Have you not suffered to beget him?' he went on. 'How can you reject him? You are always thinking of your children's good, though they are often selfish and think only of their own advantage. Your child may be lazy or ill-behaved. But yet you cannot drive him away, you cannot harass him so that he quits you.'

Many examples could be quoted to illustrate the strength of this ideal. I sacked one of my servants for petty theft. A day or two later an elder who was known to be one of my friends came to intercede for him. He admitted that the man was a thief, but he was very disappointed when I declined to take him back. 'You are his father,' he said, 'and you ought to take him back.' Then, after a short silence, he added gravely, 'You white men! You are not like us. You do not understand the meaning of "to beg forgiveness".'

A better instance is an incident in which Lɔyani himself was concerned some days after he made the comment quoted above. A youth of Lɔyani's clan stole a fowl owned by another member of his own joint family, whom he called his older brother (*bier*). The theft, a despicable thing in any case, was made blacker by the youth's attempt to conceal it; and when it was discovered, the whole clan was agog with it. The culprit's father, in his shame and anger at the disgrace brought upon his family, struck and cursed him saying that he must never again set foot in the house. Thereupon the young man took refuge with Lɔyani, whose son was his friend. Lɔyani himself, like all respectable people, was shocked at the theft. 'Heaven save me from theft,' he said, when he told me the story. 'Death were better than that. It is shameful.' And he went on to describe how everybody scorns and derides a thief. Nevertheless, as soon as the boy arrived Lɔyani went to the elders of the boy's lineage to get them to intercede with the father to withdraw his

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

593 685 curse and take his son back. But meanwhile the boy sneaked away and went to his brother in Mampurugu for fear of public ridicule. 'But', said Loyani, 'one day he will return and his father will certainly take him back.' It is because a man cannot disown his child that a Tale father always stands by his son in what the natives call *pɔyadir yɛla*, marriage affairs, the test occasions of jural responsibility. A man may have strong private objections to his son's marriage and eventually cause it to be dissolved. He may criticize and scold his son for it. But in public he will support the boy if the marriage does not infringe some rule of kinship or convention of social relationships. This, it should be noted, is not the same thing as a man's responsibility for his son's bride-price which rests on a different principle. For the same reason a woman can never be denied refuge in her father's house if she has nowhere else to stay.

593 A woman, too, cannot disown her child. Indeed Tallensi say that it is unthinkable for a woman, bound as she is to her child by even stronger emotional bonds than a man. It happens, of course, that women desert, or are taken away from one husband to marry another and leave a child behind. But if the child is still too tiny to fend for itself it accompanies its mother until it is old enough to be separated (*pɔhəg*) from her. Tallensi are very critical of a woman who deserts a child when she leaves its father, though not without ulterior motives; for a runaway wife is a loss, whether she leaves children or not. As has been mentioned, they say that in such cases 'Rearing is more important than bearing'. And yet, they say, a woman yearns after her child no matter who has the custody of it. She might easily desert a later husband to return to an earlier husband with whom she has left a child; and if a woman who has been married more than once returns to her first husband, his rights take precedence of all the others' by Tale custom. That is why men object strongly to a wife's attempting to visit or even see a child she has left with a former husband. I have seen a man keep watch on his wife for days lest she make such an attempt. 'Do you know what bearing (a child) means to a woman?' he said, in explanation. In any case, her marital history makes no difference to the *song* (uterine) tie between a woman and her child and to the social relationships arising out of it. As we have already learnt, there is no surer guarantee that a woman will [837] stay with a husband than if she has two or three children by him. If she has children, a woman who commits adultery almost invariably returns to her husband, risking the wrath of his ancestor spirits and enduring the shame of a semi-public confession. If she has none, she usually runs off with her paramour.

593 The ideas we have been discussing are not thought to have a ritual sanction where own parents and children are concerned. But with proxy ●577 parents, as might be expected, a ritual sanction comes into the picture openly. A man who disowns or ill-treats or in other ways neglects the

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

duties of a 'father' to a dead brother's children, especially minor children, incurs the anger of his paternal ancestors. Human nature being what it is, Tallensi say, it happens all too often that men behave disgracefully to a dead brother's children. Sometimes retribution comes in their lifetime. Sometimes, however, the sanction which re-establishes the moral law only comes into action after their death. Then the diviners who are consulted declare that they have not been 'accepted' (*die*) by the ancestors whom they have gone to join. Their own sons must make ritual amends to set the matter right, and so the moral principles they sinned against are vindicated.

Filial Piety

The counterpart of parental duty and devotion is filial piety. It is regarded by the Tallensi as an equally binding moral principle and an equally strong motive of individual conduct; and they trace it back, also, to the tribulations parents undergo in bringing a child into the world. It is not a formally elaborated doctrine, as among the Chinese, nor a dogma of faith, as among the ancient Hebrews, nor a legal principle, as in ancient Rome, but a diffused norm of conduct. The Tallensi would laugh at the idea of kowtowing to a parent, and their respect for parental authority is far from being blind obedience. For one of the significant characteristics of the relations of parents and children is their ambivalence. In everyday intercourse there is a freedom in these relations, verging on camaraderie. Yet they are full of tensions due to the self-assertion of children against their parents. It is the characteristic picture of the relations between successive generations in a patrilineal society—parents and children bound to one another by the strongest ties of sentiment and interest but latently pitted against one another, particularly in the case of fathers and sons. Filial piety among the Tallensi can be interpreted, in some of its expressions, as a bulwark against the disintegrative effects of these tensions or as a stabilizing mechanism of behaviour the main function of which is to close the gap between parents and children if it threatens to become too large.

We have seen how important it is for a man's status whether or not he has a father alive. If anything, his status is advanced by the death of his nearest fathers, and it is not until he is 'fatherless' within the nuclear lineage that he attains jural autonomy. In this, as in all aspects of the relations of father and son, Tale custom is ambivalent. After a certain stage of social maturity men desire to be free of paternal restraint, and yet they are glad to leave the bigger responsibilities for their lives in the hands of a father. It is not surprising that the affective stress, in Tale thought, is on the blessings of having a father alive.

Speaking conventionally, Tallensi say that one must obey one's father, respect him, work for him, take his side against everybody else—even

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

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against one's mother—'*ɔn dɔyi la zugu*—because he begot you'. One's dependence on him increases one's attachment and sense of duty towards him. Dependence on one's father is a good thing, a highly desirable and advantageous state of affairs, and the essence of filial piety is to accept this condition of dependence as the right thing in life. Tallensi say that a man has no cares while his father is alive. He looks after all one's affairs (*maal i yɛla*). He takes charge of the farming, attends to all ritual matters such as sacrifices to the ancestors and the consultation of diviners if one is ill, and assumes responsibility for such things as the payment of bride-price. He takes care of the house (*gur yiri*) both in the physical sense of always staying at home and in the jural and ritual sense of being its responsible head, leaving his sons free to go about as they please. The emphasis is on the father as the one who bears all responsibility for one's welfare in economic, jural, and ritual matters. That is why, the natives say, a man mourns the death of a father, for henceforth he must take on the burden of responsibility for himself. It means the end of protection and security in relation to society at large and to the spirits of the ancestors.

The picture is overdrawn but not inaccurate. The burden of social responsibility does not weigh so heavily as this statement implies. Siŋ and Gbana, both young men in the twenties, managed their households very well. But both often bemoaned their fate in having been left fatherless when still boys. 'If my father were alive I would have had a wife by now', said Siŋ, 'and Na'abzɔ (his proxy father) would not have used my sister's bride-price cattle for his own purposes.' The death of the father often means the uprooting of his sons. 'Now', said Kɛlibsɔ after his father's funeral ceremonies were over, 'we (he and his brothers) shall become poor men. When our father was alive we had a large home farm to cultivate. Now our junior father (*ba-pit*) will take that and we shall have to go and farm our bush farms. Soon the day will come when we shall move out, for who knows how a *ba-pit* will look after you?' I have heard boys of 9 or 10 talk in this way after the death of their father. It is easier for a woman who has her husband's protection. But even she suffers a sad loss in the death of her own father. His heirs, even her own brothers, will never have quite the same intimate and personal interest in her and her children.

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There is a direct connexion between this emphasis on the dependence of children on parents and the worship of the ancestors. Nor is the underlying feeling of a hidden antagonism between father and son, of which we shall have more to say presently, altogether incongruous with this overt stress on the security the father symbolizes. The social relations of father and son, at every stage of the latter's development, are always a compromise between the mutual dependence of father and son and the limited dependence enjoyed by the latter.

There is not the same degree of tension between mother and child or

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

even mother and daughter, and hence, perhaps, Tallensi do not have such a definite conventional rationalization of their attitudes towards the mother. They say you respect your mother and cherish her in old age because she bore and fed you. In childhood you were more attached to her than to your father; you ran to her whenever you were tired or hungry or ill and she comforted and fed you; as an adult you realize the importance of 'father's begetting' (*ba-dɣam*) in jural, ritual, and economic matters such as marriage or landowning, and in crises like sickness or death; but your mother is still honoured as the centre of your domestic arrangements if you are a man, and if you are a woman, she is the one person you can always come to in sickness or trouble, in the certainty of loving attention. Comfort, emotional security, and food—these are the distinguishing qualities of a mother in Tale thought. It corresponds to the more personal character of the bonds between mother and child, by contrast with the jurally and ritually weighted ties with the father.

Tallensi say that one must respect one's living parents; but to one's dead parents one owes reverence and submission in surpassing degree. That is what the proverb 'Fear the dead and do not fear the living' means to them.[1] One can defy a living parent sometimes and rely on being forgiven; one cannot defy a dead parent. One can live without the help of a living parent, if necessary, but not without the mystical protection of one's dead parents.

In the religious practice of the Tallensi the ancestors exercise their powers without compunction. They punish and slay as arbitrarily as they bless. Every dry season men return to rebuild their parental homes which have been allowed to lie in decay for many years. They come from Mampurugu, from outlying parts of Taleland, or from Ashanti and the Colony. Some have been away for years. Pal of Zubiuŋ had a prosperous farm in Mampurugu, where he had gone to settle on being discharged from the regiment after the war of 1914–18. During his fifteen years in Mampurugu he had become fairly wealthy, with five wives, a horse, several head of cattle, and a quantity of good clothes. Dema of Tenzugu, who joined the regiment as far back as 1912 and had lived in Ashanti as a trader since his discharge after the war, was obviously a man of considerable wealth by Tale standards. Both returned to rebuild their fathers' homesteads in 1935–6. They told the same story. Wives and children had died; there had been repeated bouts of sickness in the family; other misfortunes had piled up over the years; and all, as the diviners declared, because they had 'rejected (*zaɣah*) their fathers (*banam*)' by remaining in foreign parts. It did not matter much while there were older brothers at home to 'give water (*zaŋ kuom ti*)', that is, make sacrifices, to the ancestral shrines. But

[1] The verb *zo*, to fear, has a wide range of meaning and here it means to show respect towards, to revere, to stand in awe of.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

769 when they were left as heads of their lineage segments they had to come
577 home. Their fathers' spirits would have killed them if they had not
167 done so. Dema is frankly happy to be home again amongst his own people after his wanderings. Pal, who is dependent on farming for his living, still speaks with a tinge of regret of the fine farm he had to abandon in Mampurugu. But he feels that he had no option, and there is even an element of pride in his submission to the *force majeure* of his dead father, since he is now the head of his lineage segment. It was the same with Na'abzɔ, Kayar, Yinworəb, Baŋgam-Teroog, and many others, too numerous to mention, who returned home after years abroad in order to 'give water' to their fathers.

769 While the whole ancestor cult is an elaborate expression of filial piety
577 towards the dead parents, one of the commonest ways in which the observer comes across it is in the practice of leechcraft. Almost every
757 native owns some 'roots (*ŋaŋa*)' for the treatment of sickness, and the therapeutic value of the roots lies not so much in their physical properties as in the fact that their owner is able, by right of ownership, to mobilize magical virtue in their support. As a preliminary to the curative rites the owner of the roots always calls upon his or her ancestors for a blessing, and this opens with the phrase 'My father, I shall call you (first). You have no concern with this matter, but I call on you (to help me) for the sake of begetting, because you begot me (*Mba, n-na mbuola nyɛni. Nyɛn baha ka dɛni, ka mbuoli la dɔŋam la zug, nyɛn dɔŋəm la zugu*).'

577 Naturally the ritual aspect of filial piety is of greater importance for
593 a man than for a woman, considered in terms of their social personalities and with regard to the father; for he stands for the lineage and clan,
769 with all that membership of these units implies, for the land and other patrimonial property, and for the ancestral home (*daboog*). But it is important for a woman, too, and in relation to the mother as well. A woman is the spiritual ward (*sɛŋəraan*) of one of her paternal forbears and remains under that ancestor's or ancestress's guardianship all her life. And it is through her father that she maintains good ritual relations with her ancestor guardian—either through sacrifices made by her father on her behalf or through the intermediation of her father's spirit when he is dead. Moreover, her father's spirit is of great importance
[787] to her children. It is significant that if a male line dies out a female survivor takes on the duty of sacrificing to the lineage shrines, which she can only approach through her father's spirit.

A man's mother's spirit is of as much importance for him as an individual as his father's. He has a shrine dedicated to her and other shrines dedicated to ancestors of hers. A mother's shrine is often the first after his *Yin* shrine to be dedicated by a man and is always felt to be more peculiarly his own than a father's shrine, which is heritable by half-brothers. A man would not return from abroad because of the demands

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of his dead mother's spirit; she is not tied to the lineage home in the same way as a father's spirit is and can be 'given water' more easily wherever the man happens to be. Nevertheless, his welfare and that of his dependants rests as much on his maintaining good relations with her spirit as with his father's spirit.

Filial piety among the Tallensi is a great deal more than a customary injunction to honour and respect one's parents. Psychologically it is a very complex sentiment. Even during their lifetime parents have quasi-mystical attributes, as we shall see more clearly when we consider the relations of parents and first-born children, and these dominate the sentiment. A parent can bless or curse a child. A parent's curse, in particular, is greatly dreaded, as we have previously noted, and, in consequence, only resorted to in case of gross affront or unforgivable defiance on the part of a child. If a parent expresses or merely feels resentment against a child, that is equivalent to a curse which may cause it illness or otherwise harm. Thus one element in the sentiment of filial piety is respect for the blessing and fear of the curse of a parent. That is why, men say, it is sometimes embarrassing to have an old mother in one's house, though one is bound to keep her, both in duty and out of affection. For old women become completely egoistic. All they think of is having enough to eat and being comfortable, and if they are crossed they are apt to curse anybody incontinently.

In a large joint family one often finds a young man with a growing family of his own torn between his devotion to his father and his desire to be economically independent so as to provide for his wife and children more satisfactorily. He cannot go out to farm on his own without his father's blessing and consent else his venture will surely fail. He begins to drop hints or makes a tentative approach to his father. But if the latter shows displeasure he retreats at once. I have seen this happen more than once. When Tɔɣalbɛrəgu wanted to go out to farm on his own, his father Naabdiya reproached him, saying that *he* had not deserted *his* father as Tɔɣalbɛrəgu now wished to desert *him*. Tɔɣalbɛrəgu apologized and withdrew. But, as Naabdiya told me, 'I still had resentment in my heart and he still secretly cherished his plan'. A couple of weeks later Tɔɣalbɛrəgu developed a large boil in the armpit. In panic he begged an elder to ask Naabdiya to forgive him and formally withdraw his implicit curse, which, he was certain, was the cause of the boil. It was the same with Yinyɛla's son Duun. Though as an eldest son he felt entitled to start farming on his own, he dared not ask that hard old man's permission for fear that it might arouse his resentment.

It is an interesting point that when a young man who has been living and farming with his dead father's brother, for example, sets up in his own homestead, the pretext for the separation is often not an economic one. It is commonly recognized that the young man moves out because he needs more land and freedom to provide for his family by himself.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 But if the father's brother does not take the initiative of pointing out to his 'son' that he would be better off on his own, the latter cannot do so. 593 It would be like suggesting that his proxy father is not treating him as fairly as his own father. The usual course of events is that something goes wrong with the young man's affairs. It may be a trivial mishap, such as a hen being caught by a hyena, or something more serious, such as the sickness of wife or child. The young man goes with his proxy father to consult a diviner; and the diviner declares that the trouble was caused by the young man's own father, because the young man has not yet built his own homestead. The dead father lets it be known that he wants to go directly to his son's own house to accept sacrifices and not have to go to his brother's house as a mere guest. Thus the dictates of filial piety are subtly and doubly fulfilled.

577 Filial piety, as these examples show, is the psychological bridge 593 between the relations of parents and children in life and in the ritual 769 relationships of the living with the ancestors. All the ancestors are projections of the parents, different manifestations of the images Tale culture draws of certain aspects of the parents that do not appear in conventional, overt behaviour. This is clear, also, from the element of reverence that enters into the sentiment of filial piety.

Siŋ's father and Na'abzɔ were the sons of two brothers. When Siŋ's 577 father died, Na'abzɔ married his widow and took charge of the children. But Na'abzɔ is a notoriously cantankerous person. So Siŋ took his 593 younger brothers and mother and set up in his own homestead as soon as he was old enough. In jural and ritual matters, however, Na'abzɔ is still his 'father'. Passing Siŋ's house one day with an elder I heard sounds of violent quarrelling between him and Na'abzɔ. Na'abzɔ stood on the flat roof of a room in his house hurling abuse at Siŋ, who replied angrily, but politely, from his gateway 50 yards away. My companion and I turned aside to talk to Siŋ. It appeared that Na'abzɔ had as usual been nagging Siŋ and his brothers unreasonably. He demanded that they should leave their own farm-work to come and hoe his farm. When Siŋ asked for his help, which was indispensable, in an important ritual matter, he had refused out of petty spite; and now he had upset Siŋ's sister's marriage by arbitrary and inconsiderate demands on her husband. I asked Siŋ, 'Why don't you take hold of Na'abzɔ and thrash him? That should stop him.' He looked at me in dismay and said, 'No, no. I couldn't do that. It is forbidden. He is my father. He begot me.' My companion, almost as shocked, chimed in, 'No, you can't strike your father, you can't strike your mother. They have borne (*dʒʏa*) you. He who strikes his father or his mother is a good-for-nothing.' He went on to say that everybody knew what sort of a person Na'abzɔ was, but Siŋ 577 must be patient. It would all come right. For would not Na'abzɔ die 593 one day and Siŋ inherit all his property? Similar comments were made 627 by everybody I met about Dɛŋkumis's brother's son, Dmaarəb. The

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

young man was a lazy spendthrift and there was constant trouble between the two. One day Dɛŋkumis forcibly stopped him from beating his wife and he turned and struck Dɛŋkumis. There was an uproar, for other men of the lineage set upon Dmaarəb with sticks and fists. Next day Dɛŋkumis, followed by all the men of his lineage segment, dragged the delinquent to the chief. As it was a *dugni yɛl*, an affair of the inner lineage, the chief dealt with it as head of the clan. Trembling with anger and contempt he read the youth an excoriating homily on how a person ought to behave to his parents. Dɛŋkumis, ended the chief, had been too patient with the worthless scamp just because he was his brother's son. Let him beware. Another action of this kind, and Dɛŋkumis would be commanded to throw him out of his house.

Another story deserves recording as an example of the working of filial piety. Kuŋaaŋba was born when his father was an old man. At that time a famine swept the country. A distant clansman of his father seized his mother and her babe to sell them into slavery and recoup himself for a debt owed to him by Kuŋaaŋba's father. But the woman managed to escape. When the famine was over she returned home to find her husband dead and his brother Gəlime at the head of the household. Gəlime, however, disregarding the rule that whoever inherits a man's property and status must take over his duties and liabilities, at first refused to have her back. She was like a corpse that had come to life again, he said. But his own wife, with an independence of spirit that Tale women often show, threatened to leave him if he did not take her co-wife and the child back, so he gave in. In due course Kuŋaaŋba's mother remarried one of her late husband's classificatory brothers, under whose care the boy grew up. Jurally and ritually Gəlime remained his 'father'. Then Kuŋaaŋba went to work for the white man at Kumasi. He returned with a quantity of clothes, a bag of salt, and three or four pounds in cash. He found Gəlime, now an old man in decline, left almost destitute, as his own sons, whom he had always treated with severity, had both run away to the Colony. Kuŋaaŋba at once took the old man to his own house. He gave him a cloth to wear, bought a supply of grain for him, and left him some money when he himself departed for another spell of work abroad. Thereafter Kuŋaaŋba took care of Gəlime as if he were his own father until the end of his life. 'For', said Kuŋaaŋba, as he concluded his simple tale, 'was he not my father? What did it matter that he had treated me badly in my childhood, since I am still alive and healthy? I couldn't leave my father to die of starvation just because his own sons were wastrels.' I asked Kuŋaaŋba if Gəlime had ever expressed remorse for having neglected his duty to him in his childhood. 'No,' was the answer, 'he would not do that. He would keep it to himself but his heart would be sore (*u suh ndum*). And now that he is dead he will (as a spirit) do good to me.' It was true, commented an elder who had listened to the story; a son who had

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 593 no charity (*ɔn ka sugɔru*) would perhaps have done otherwise, but Kunaaŋba's way was the right way.

It is on the death of a parent that filial piety is most sharply evoked, just as it is the death of a child that brings out most poignantly a parent's love and devotion. We have referred to this previously. In this matter filial sentiment and ritual sanctions converge.

764 577 593 765 The supreme act of filial piety sons owe to their parents is the performance of their mortuary and funeral ceremonies. If a man or woman dies leaving no sons then this duty falls upon his or her nearest proxy sons. The initiative and chief responsibility rest with the oldest living son. The burial rites must be carried out immediately; but when and how the funeral ceremony is to be made is for the sons to decide. No one can put pressure on them to hurry on the funeral if they wish to postpone it for several years. It is customary to delay the funeral of an elder, an old woman, or a person holding a ritual office until the third year after his or her death, ostensibly so as to enable the sons to collect the large stock of grain and the livestock required for the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the case of a man the sons exercise the social role of the [793] deceased. If he was a tendaana they will perform the duties and exercise the rights of his office, and this may be a motive for delaying his funeral beyond the customary period. The old men who are eligible for the office can object and grumble; they cannot compel a dead man's son to make his father's funeral. The issue lies between the dead man and his sons. If they delay unduly they will incur their father's anger. For until his funeral has been celebrated he dwells between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. As the Tallensi say, his one leg is in the earth (among the spirits) and his other on the surface of the earth (among the living) (*u gbɛr dɛkɔ bɛ teŋni ka gbɛr dɛna bɛ doorni*). He cannot 'join his forefathers (*paag u banam*)' until he has been 'taken back into the house (*kpeeh dugni*)' as a spirit. And the situation is the same with a dead mother, though she is of less jural importance.

769 577 764 The duty of burying a parent and celebrating his or her funeral is the first step in the most exacting of all filial duties, the cult of the dead parents. Native thought and behaviour show that the Tallensi feel it as an inescapable compulsion of conscience, and not as a mere act of propriety. Tallensi are quite matter-of-fact about the corpse (*kum*) of a dead parent. They describe it as the 'slough (*ʃɔrəŋ*)' of the soul (*sii*). What they are concerned about is the spirit (*kpiim*) of the dead parent. A man cannot rest secure until he has assimilated his father's or mother's spirit into the framework of his life, domesticated it, so to speak, as the expression *kpeeh dugni* shows; and this is the function of the funeral ceremony. For that reason Tallensi want to have the graves of their parents near their dwellings. True, a man's ancestor spirits accompany him wherever he goes, but they are most tangibly present in his house, where he sacrifices to them. It often happens that a man has to be

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

buried in one of the peripheral settlements, or abroad, where he has been living temporarily. Then, if his sons return to the ancestral home, perhaps years after his death, he will one day, through a diviner, order them to exhume (*gurəg*) him and rebury him among his ancestors at the ancestral home (*daboog*). The notion that when a person dies he joins his ancestors (or a woman her husband's ancestors as well as her own), and that his body should therefore lie among their bodies, is a basic idea in Tale religion and an obvious reflex of filial piety.

As the case of Sawəŋba's daughter, previously quoted (p. 89), shows, daughters are as much bound as sons to mourn the death of a parent. All the children of the deceased must come to the funeral so as to undergo the mourning rites. They are ritually unclean until they have done so and have had their heads ritually shaved (*kuo zug*) in sign of it. Though the ritual uncleanness (*dayət*) of a person who has lost a parent does not interfere with normal life, it is felt to be a psychological burden, for, as we have noted, until a dead person's funeral has been made, his or her social personality is not wholly erased from the real world. I have heard children of 10 or 11 say gravely that they wished their mother's or father's funeral could be made soon so that they could 'shave off the uncleanness (*kuo dayət la bah*)'. The uncleanness adheres primarily to the deceased's own children, but it also affects proxy children who have no living parent (as determined by the criteria of 'fatherlessness' or 'motherlessness') of the same sex as the deceased. One of the ways in which Tallensi demonstrate respect and affection for a classificatory parent such as a father's agnatic cousin or a classificatory father's wife, who has never been a proxy parent to them, is to undergo the chief mourning rites for him or her—provided, of course, the mourner is 'fatherless' or 'motherless' in that situation. When an old man or woman who was the last of the generation of 'fathers' or 'mothers' of the inner lineage dies, the men and women of the lineage to whom he or she is a classificatory parent gather from far and wide for the funeral and all undergo the rites of shaving the head. It is not compulsory for anyone to have the head shaved for a classificatory parent, but it is a pious gesture which at the same time proclaims the solidarity of the lineage. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* might be a Tale proverb. Old grudges are forgotten—though not necessarily buried for ever—and men and women who have been estranged from their classificatory brothers and sisters or the deceased parent turn up to the funeral to do the proper thing.

Nowadays the death of a parent is one of the strongest sanctions that induce the men who go to work abroad to return home, if only for a while. The absentees may dawdle for weeks or months or even two or three years—for funeral ceremonies can be postponed, as we have noted, for periods up to three, four, or more years—but most of them come home eventually for the rites. Those who delay so long that their

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 765 relatives at home decide not to wait for them are the exceptions that prove the rule. In a few cases they are men who have struck root in their new environment after many years of living there and find it difficult to get away. Sometimes they find it easier to procrastinate because they originally left home through a quarrel with the deceased parent. But generally they tarry because the deceased is a proxy parent or because they have older brothers at home who will conduct the funeral. Later, perhaps, when the mantle of the lineage headship falls on their shoulders they will return, like Pal and Dema, to take over and end their lives in the ancestral home. It is a feature of Tale custom that natural human weaknesses are not unduly penalized by public opinion. As long as he lives a man can always try to make good his derelictions of filial duty. It lies between him and his ancestors. The community is neutral.

577 765 593 At funeral ceremonies of old people one also sees that filial piety includes pride in one's parents. The *koordaana*, owner of the funeral or chief mourner (that is, the deceased's oldest son), and his brothers strain their resources to the utmost to provide a lavish funeral. It is not uncommon for nearly the whole harvest of a household to be consumed in making the beer and providing the cooked food required. In addition, animals must be slaughtered in honour of the dead. A poor man may be able to give his father only a couple of sheep or goats which he has had to borrow for the purpose. On the other hand, when Doohraan, the head of Siiyɛŋ biis of Tongo, died, rich in years and in honour, his sons slaughtered a cow, a donkey, and about a dozen small stock for his spirit; and Sayawuob postponed his mother's funeral for two years so that he should be able to give her a cow. At a big funeral, when the war parade (*dee*) and the whole concourse of clansfolk, kinsfolk, neighbours, and friends of the dead stand milling at the gateway, the oldest son climbs on to the wall to address the crowd. Wearing [542] his ceremonial plumed helmet of straw, with a large red cock in his hand, he looks down haughtily upon the crowd and delivers his harangue. [537] His speech, spun out with all the tricks of rhetoric in the Tale repertoire, is proud almost to the point of arrogance. He is relating the great deeds of his dead father or mother. They may seem trivial, sometimes, to the cold-blooded ethnographer—so and so borrowed five cows and paid them back in two years; so and so was a redoubtable farmer who in one year sold enough grain to buy three cows; another man boldly carried off his wife from under the noses of Mamprusi who had seized her; and this old woman was a potteress who by her own efforts earned the money to buy two cows, and in addition had been faithful to her first and only husband until his death. But it is not the substance so much as the occasion of these funeral panegyrics that matter to the Tallensi. At the end of his speech the son beats the cock (or if he is a rich man it may be a goat) to death on the wall and flings it to the crowd with a challenge that any person who can claim equal achievements should take it. But

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

someone in the crowd always cries out that there is no one who can match these achievements or can claim that his father or mother did so.

This is the most dramatic though not the only expression of pride in one's parents among the Tallensi. They always show off an old parent, own or classificatory, with great pride to a visitor. I have often been led out of my way to shake the hand of a blind and senile old man or old woman who was too bemused with age to understand the long speech with which we were presented to each other. Women and children tell the stranger proudly, 'Don't you know so and so? I am his child.' This pride in one's parents is the reciprocal of their pride and satisfaction in the possession of children. It is so marked with old people in part because the Tallensi honour old age as a sign of good luck (*zuson*). The death of an old parent is an occasion of rejoicing rather than of lamentation for they say, 'Has he not savoured life to the full? (*U pu di ŋɔvɔr sa'ahi*).' At the same time the natives say that the death of an old man is a loss to his sons even though he had long relinquished the management of household affairs to them and had only a titular superiority in the affairs of the community. He may be blind, deaf, and senile, as Doohraan was, but he is still the head of the family and lineage, the hub of their unity, and the intermediary between them and their ancestors. However infirm an old man may be of body or understanding he is regularly told of everything that happens in the house, and his consent is always obtained before anything is done in his name, as everything that pertains to the family or lineage must be.

From all that has been said here it can be seen that filial piety among the Tallensi is by no means a simple and stereotyped attitude. Respect, affection, a feeling of mutual identification, and a sense of dependence, supported by the whole strength of the lineage system and the ancestor cult, are mingled with great freedom in everyday intercourse, as we shall see shortly, and with the strain of latent antagonism. It is an indication of the strength and internal consistency of the social system as a whole that ruptures between father and son are not very common.

Filial piety is a significant element in all Tale genealogical relationships. A person's loyalty to and solidarity with his lineage springs from his relationship with his father, his ties with his matrilateral kin from his relationship with his mother. The founding ancestor of a lineage is visualized as its 'father' and the progenitrix of a lineage segment as its 'mother'.[1] A person identifies himself with his patrilateral kin through first identifying himself with his father, and with his matrilateral kin by extending his identification with his mother. Economic motives, jural rules, and ritual sanctions work on the individual through his sentiments of filial piety.

This can be seen clearly in the interlocking of land tenure, local cohesion, and clan solidarity. The land a man owns in his clan settlement

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 201 ff.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 613 is usually land that has come to him by inheritance from his father.[1] It is hallowed land because it has come to him thus. This land is the basis of his local and economic ties with his lineage and clan. In psychological terms it stands for the most significant aspects of his own development and of his relationship with his father. It was here that he learnt to farm, working side by side with his father and thus coming to know every inch of it. His father's social personality is for him closely associated with this land, with the homestead which stands on it somewhere, and with the family graves including, in time, those of his parents, that lie there. When he inherits this land it is the principal sign that he has at length stepped into his father's shoes.

577 613 166 The cycle of development through which the nuclear lineage regularly passes shows the working of filial piety very clearly. A typical history is that of Ba'ahug's house. When Ba'ahug inherited the homestead and the home farms of his nuclear lineage, at Tɔŋ-Kuorɔg, about thirty years ago, he had living with him his son Saŋgbɔŋ and his full brother Zɔŋ. Then Ba'ahug died and his brother Zɔŋ inherited the homestead and the patrimony. In due course Saŋgbɔŋ moved out to build his homestead on his own father's part of the patrimonial bush farm at Gbambee, and there he brought up his family. In 1934 Zɔŋ died and Saŋgbɔŋ inherited the homestead and patrimony. He remained at Gbambee, however, until 1936. There had been illness and other mishaps in his family, and the diviners declared that his father, who was buried beside the original homestead at Kuorɔg, was demanding that he (Saŋgbɔŋ) should go back there. So in 1936 he handed over the homestead at Gbambee and some of the land there to his oldest son and returned to take up his abode in the ancestral homestead. For him the cycle of development from the domestically unitary joint family through the phase of its dispersion and back to a phase of unity was completed. The unity would have been more obvious still if he had made his oldest son accompany him to the old homestead, and if his late 'father' Zɔŋ's children had remained with him. Actually Zɔŋ's sons, finding that the land that would now be available for their use was insufficient, decided to move to Biuŋ; and there was no need for Saŋgbɔŋ to summon his own oldest son to come and live with him as the homestead at Gbambee is regarded merely as an outpost of the ancestral home. There is this advantage, also, about keeping up the Gbambee outpost, that when Saŋgbɔŋ dies Zɔŋ's oldest son will be the heir and will return to resume the ancestral home and lands. This will mean that Saŋgbɔŋ's sons will probably have to move out to their father's land at Gbambee, so the homestead might as well be kept up. If Saŋgbɔŋ had died at Gbambee before inheriting the ancestral home he would have been brought home to Kuorɔg for burial beside his father and forefathers.

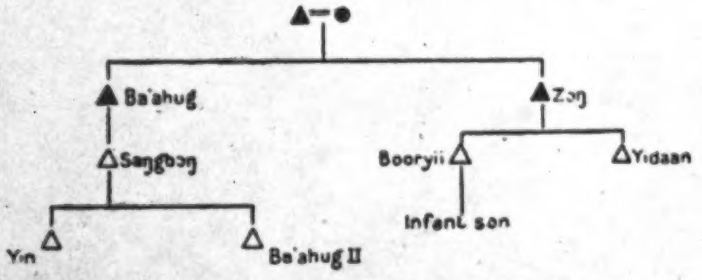
In the next generation there will be a new development. For Saŋgbɔŋ's

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xi.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

sons their father's home and land has a double location. In terms of their own experience and immediate attachments it is the home and land at Gbambee; in terms of the jural and ritual functions of the lineage it is the home and land at Kuorəg. The oldest of them may go back to Kuorəg when he inherits the patrimony. The younger may prefer to stay at Gbambee when he becomes head of the lineage and leave the Kuorəg homestead and land to the other branch of the lineage. He will be living in what is to him his father's homestead and on what is to him his father's land in the most intimate and personal sense. And when he dies his kinsmen will probably be informed by the diviner consulted on the day he is buried that he desires to be buried at Gbambee and not at Kuorəg. Thenceforth a new home is established for one of the lines of agnatic descent sprung from Saŋgbəŋ. This branch will still maintain close jural, economic, and religious ties with the other branches of the same segment established at Kuorəg and will act together with those branches in all corporate affairs, but it will be independently localized. Thus filial piety which has drawn Saŋgbəŋ back into the local orbit of his ancestral lineage, and will keep him there even after death, will be the ostensible incentive that will make one of his sons establish a new home for his posterity at Gbambee.

The following genealogy shows the agnatic relationship of the individuals that have been mentioned:



And the table on p. 184 shows the cycle of development of this nuclear lineage as we have sketched it.

The natives are well aware, of course, that these processes of dispersion and reintegration in the nuclear lineage arise directly out of the genealogical cleavages and economic needs of its component segments. But the chief sanction for each defined stage in the process is, in their eyes, filial piety. Objectively, it appears to the anthropologist as a socially accepted rationalization or pretext covering a rearrangement of property and jural relations made necessary by economic needs and the logic of the social structure; subjectively, it is felt by those concerned as an irresistible ritual sanction, crystallized as a command from the father's spirit. It works consistently in the direction of keeping the lineage intact

[Text continued on p. 185. - Analyst]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

in relation to its local and spiritual focus. Economic necessity is undoubtedly the chief incentive to fission in the joint family, but the process of reintegration is as much or more the result of ritual and affective forces.

This is the essence of the pull exercised on every Talən by his father's original home (*daboog* pl. *dabaar*), and on lineages in their corporate existence by the *daboog* of their founding ancestor. We have already recorded several cases of men who returned to rebuild their fathers' homesteads after many years of absence. As these instances show, it often involves an economic loss when a man gives up fertile land in a peripheral settlement to return to one of the ancient settlements where the soil is less productive. There are many men who in their young days farmed at Biuŋ or Gbambee or Datɔk and had many cattle, sheep, and goats then but now have no more than their neighbours. Their explanation is that they had to give up their farms in the peripheral settlements to come and rebuild their fathers' original homesteads, thus exchanging plenty for poverty. This was the story of Sayəbazaa and Na'ampaahya, of Saandi, Loobuol-Kugər, and of Sayawuob, and of many more than need be mentioned here, in addition to those already referred to. It was the religious and affective associations of their ancestral homes that drew the Hill Talis back to the hills in 1936 after twenty-five years of exile, in spite of the economic sacrifice this meant for a great many of them. Down on the plains most of them had all the land they needed immediately around their homesteads. It was fertile land, too, won from the uncultivated bush. They were better off for food than they had been on the hills. But they gladly gave up their temporary homes and farms to return to their exiguous stony patches and strips on their hilltops, the crops of which have to be supplemented by farming bush farms three or four miles away. For all their rationalizations about the better climate and pleasanter surroundings of the hills, the truth was that it was a matter of faith. On the hills they were back among their fathers and forefathers, and this gave them a sense of religious security they had lacked on the plains. It meant, also, that they were back in the right local setting of their clan and lineage relationships.

The return of the Hill Talis to their ancestral homes is a striking case because it involved the building of between 250 and 300 homesteads[1] in two dry seasons and the movement of over 2,000 people. But every dry season, within a settlement, one finds men rebuilding homesteads on the long-deserted sites of their fathers' homesteads. This happens when a man at length succeeds to the position his father held in the lineage structure. So Deemzeet built a new homestead on the site of his own father's homestead when he became head of the section of Puhug at Tongo. Or it may be simply that a man has a series of

[1] A minimum estimate. The total number of homesteads built or rebuilt was probably nearer 500, but I was not able to check this.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 63 166

misfortunes and learns from a diviner that this is due to his dead father who is angry with him for leaving his *daboog* site derelict. That was the case with Pa'anbɔbis and Mambaŋya.

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We have said previously that the sentiments, the rights, and the duties of parent and child to one another are traced back by the natives to the fact of birth; but in actual social usage they are fortified by strong ritual sanctions. Tallensi have these in mind when they say that a father's authority is irresistible because 'he sacrifices for you (to your ancestors)'. Your father 'owns (*so*)' you because he begot (*dɔŋa*) you; and he sacrifices (*kaab*) on your behalf because he begot you; you can only approach your ancestors through your father while he is alive, and if you do so after his death it is always through the intermediation of his spirit. It all goes back to the fact of birth, but the ritual sanctions are the most important instrument by which a father's authority is maintained, as our discussion has several times shown, particularly in the case of a proxy or classificatory father. Siŋ cannot defy his proxy father Na'abzɔ 'because', as he says, 'he sacrifices for me'; Da'amo'o chafes under the vexations Kutɔbis and his sons frequently put upon him, but he cannot, for the same reason, disregard Kutɔbis's authority over him as his late father's brother. It is very rarely indeed that a man in a paternal position will refuse to sacrifice on behalf of another who is in the position of a 'son' to him; but the fear of this sanction has a restraining influence in cases such as those of Siŋ and Da'amo'o. The whole hierarchy of authority in the lineage rests on this ritual office. Most of the men of Yinytla's inner lineage were opposed to his cutting himself off from the rest of Puhug, but they had to 'follow (*dɔl*)' him because he had custody of the lineage *bɔŋar* and 'sacrificed for them'.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

593 584 payment of at least a part of the fixed bride-price of three cows and a bull, or their equivalent. The essential responsibility for the performance of these two acts lies with the bridegroom's father or father's heir, subject to the formal consent of the elders of his inner lineage. Formally, the bride's paternal kin send their invitation to the bridegroom's paternal kin to *lu sɛndaan* through the head of the latter's nuclear or inner lineage, and make their demands for bride-price through the same channels; for no jural act takes place except in the framework of the lineage system. But actually the responsibility for satisfying the bride's kin falls on the bridegroom's father. He must 'find the things'—the fowls and guinea-fowls—for the placation gifts; he must send off the intermediary (*pɔɣasama*) who carries them to the bride's family; he must furnish the animals or goods or money to pay the bride-price. 'Is it not his child? (*Pa u biiga*)' say the natives, implying that this is a duty arising out of the fact of parenthood. In part it is 593 a specific duty; in part it is an aspect of a general responsibility that a 672 man bears for his son's jural relations. Thus if his son's wife is abducted it is the father who calls on the other members of his inner lineage to 426 stand by him in taking action to recover the wife. If his son has abducted another man's wife the father is directly answerable. Strictly speaking a son cannot contract a debt involving heritable property such as cattle or large sums of money without his father's authorization. Even if the son is a man of substance, a wise creditor will insist that his father's (and also his brothers' of the same nuclear lineage) consent to the transaction be obtained first and made known to him. If this is not done the creditor's chances of recovery are small. It becomes a question of one man's word against another's and Tallensi are past masters in the art of putting off a creditor. The concurrence of the debtor's father and brothers fixes liability for ever, and if the debtor dies before settling the debt his father, or his heir, is liable. These rules do not apply to small sums of money, say a shilling or two, or things of small value such as a hen or a loin-cloth. But petty borrowing and lending rarely takes place between people who are not friends or close kin, and it is thus generally fitted into the scheme of reciprocal aid that obtains between friends and kinsfolk.

593 In their jural aspect these obligations of a father arise from the fact of 'begetting (*dɔɣam*)'; in their economic aspect they are greatly influ- 584 enced by the principle of reciprocity. Where obligations of such great social consequence are involved, the principle of reciprocity is not 577 limited to particular individuals but it binds their heirs and successors as well owing to the operation of the lineage principle. One or two cases will show how these two aspects are interwoven.

While Tampoyar was courting his wife he had very little recourse to his proxy father's help. The few shillings he had received from selling ground-nuts and a fowl or two sufficed to provide the occasional penny

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

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he gave the girl whenever he saw her in the market and the gifts of tobacco and kola nuts he took to his prospective parents-in-law. He had some guinea-fowls of his own and his proxy father gave him a few more to take as presents to his prospective mother-in-law. Just when he thought the time was ripe to elope with the girl her father warned him not to attempt it as she was under a ritual taboo which prohibited her from marrying in this way. To his chagrin Tampoyar was therefore compelled to ask his proxy father Kurug to negotiate for the girl's hand. At this point Kurug began to temporize. Marriage by arrangement is an expensive business. Had not Tampoyar better wait a while until the guinea-fowl chicks were bigger? Tampoyar's answer was a fit of sulks, a warning to his 'father' that he felt injured. Had he not stayed at home to help with the farming when he could easily have followed some of his contemporaries to Kumasi? Then he would have earned enough to pay the expenses of his marriage himself. Why should he tire himself out in farming if this was the treatment he got in return?

Meanwhile Kurug had been talking to the other men of his inner lineage about the affair. He felt that it was high time Tampoyar had a wife, and he knew that if the young man were frustrated his work during the coming farming season would suffer. Moreover, he might take it into his head to run away to Kumasi. Kurug's lineage brothers shared his views. Besides, Kurug had enough cattle to pay the bride-price at once if need be and it was his duty to get a wife for the youth. It was his duty as the boy's proxy father; it was a return he owed the boy for the labour he had been contributing for several years to the household economy; it was, also, a return he owed to Tampoyar's dead father. When the latter died Kurug had inherited his wife and his property as well as his children. Kurug had benefited from this inheritance and must now repay it to the dead man's son. And so he at length agreed to arrange the marriage. He asked one of his neighbours and clansmen, whose grandfather had been a sister's son (*ahoŋ*) of the bride-to-be's clan, to act as intermediary and began to get together the fowls and guinea-fowls that would be needed for the ceremony by which the bride is given to her future husband's lineage representatives.

Kurug himself provided the bulk of the 'things' required for this ceremony, but Tampoyar gave a couple of his own guinea-fowls. Kurug provided the basket of millet with which the bride's mother's co-wife was 'seen off home (*beeh*)' when she paid her the customary formal visit shortly after the marriage, and he provided all but one of the fowls and guinea-fowls for the placation gifts, Tampoyar himself giving one fowl. Lastly, it was Kurug who gave the two cows which Tampoyar's father-in-law demanded as the first instalment of the bride-price. These were cows to the purchase of which Tampoyar's labour had contributed; and if Kurug had died before Tampoyar's marriage, Tampoyar would have inherited them.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

This case, typical of dozens that occur every day among the Tallensi, shows how the motif of duty and the motif of reciprocity are intertwined. This appears still more clearly when 'father' and 'son' farm separately. Thus Sayabo of Kpata'ar was Nyaaŋzum's late half-brother's son. He occupied the same homestead as Nyaaŋzum, but separate quarters with an independent gateway and farm for himself. When Sayabo abducted a Gorogo man's wife, the injured husband, supported by his father-in-law, brought a case against Sayabo at the chief's court. Nyaaŋzum, together with Sayabo and almost all the other men of their inner lineage, went to answer the suit. Nyaaŋzum's defence was simple and straightforward. He knew of no bar to the marriage. They had no kinship ties with the girl's paternal kin, nor clanship ties with Gorogo. In former times Kpata'ar men and Gorogo men had not hesitated to abduct one another's wives. He was ready to pay the bride-price at once if the 'owner of the child (*biiraan*)'—that is the girl's jural guardian in this case, the father—agreed. The latter, however, refused to accept Sayabo as a son-in-law, so she was returned to her first husband and Nyaaŋzum forfeited his hearing fee of three shillings. Incidentally, this fee was made up of a shilling contributed by Sayabo, a shilling from Nyaaŋzum, and a shilling from another member of the inner lineage.

Why was Nyaaŋzum so ready to accept the responsibility for Sayabo's marriage and to answer for him at court, seeing that Sayabo was not farming with him? In the first place it was his duty as Sayabo's proxy father; and being a man of principle he would not evade such a duty. Even if he disapproved of the young man's behaviour he must answer for it in public, and he was under a jural obligation to pay the bride-price for the youth's wife, from his own resources if need be. In fact, however, he would not have offered to pay the bride-price with such alacrity if it were a question of using his own resources, for he had his own sons to think of. Another factor came into the situation, as Nyaaŋzum himself explained to me.

When Sayabo's father, Nyaaŋzum's half-brother Galəməyar, died, Nyaaŋzum inherited a number of cattle from him. Some were cattle Galəməyar had received as bride-price for a younger sister of his and Nyaaŋzum's. These cattle accrued to the *faar*, the patrimonial property, in the strict sense; Nyaaŋzum was entitled to dispose of them as he pleased since he was the last of his father's sons. In addition, Galəməyar's herd included cattle he had himself bought or had received in payment of his daughters', Sayabo's sisters', bride-price. As Sayabo was still only a boy, Nyaaŋzum took possession of these cattle too. In theory he could dispose of them as he pleased. In practice Sayabo had a prior right to them, since they were his father's own earnings and his sisters' bride-price animals, and Nyaaŋzum had merely a nominal overright. Nyaaŋzum had utilized most of these cattle for his own purposes; but he considered himself morally bound to make an equivalent return

3: Fortes . E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

for them to Sayabo. This was the main reason why he was ready to meet Sayabo's bride-price debt immediately. There was also a religious sanction in the background. Had he refused to support the youth, Galəmoyar's spirit would have become angry. He would have gone to their father's spirit and protested against the ill-treatment his son was receiving at his brother's hands, and the father would have punished Nyaaŋzum.

In the same way the father is the person who bears the essential jural responsibility for his son if the latter commits adultery. Though the negotiations for the reconciliation with the offended lineage or clan are carried out through the head of the inner lineage or medial lineage or even wider lineage segment to which the wrongdoer belongs, the animals sacrificed in the reconciliation rites are provided by his father.

Similarly a father is responsible for his son in all ritual matters in which the son is concerned as a member of the lineage or as the person through whom his father's line is perpetuated. A man is responsible to the ancestor spirits for performing the rites by which his child, boy or girl, is placed under the mystical care of a spirit guardian (*sɔyər*). It is the father's duty to provide the flour, beer, fowls, guinea-fowls, or other animals needed for these rites. If a child gets ill, its father has the duty of consulting a diviner and is obliged to provide any money, animals, or other goods that may be needed for the sacrifices to the ancestors, the treatment, and the payment of the medicine owner. Of course, if it is his own child a man does not think of such obligations as a duty but rather feels them to be a natural action of love and solicitude. But I have known cases where a proxy child was concerned in which the proxy father was less moved by affection than by his sense of duty and fear of mystical retribution. Among the Hill Talis it is a father's duty to provide the animals, flour, and beer required for his son's initiation into the External *Bɔyar* cult. And, to complete this catalogue of examples, a father must take the initiative and provide the 'things' needed for the rites of exorcism, if his son is persecuted by an evil Predestiny (*Yinbe'er*). If his daughter-in-law is the sufferer, he must request her father to come and perform the exorcism and must provide the contributions due from the girl's husband's family.

The mutual rights and duties of parents and children among the Tallensi have a feature of particular interest which has already been indicated in the course of our analysis, but deserves further notice. They can be used as weapons of coercion by one side against the other, the principle of reciprocity being turned into an *ad hoc* sanction. The case of Tampoyar illustrates how a son can make use of the fact that his working power is essential for the household economy to force his father to get him a wife. This sanction is openly admitted by fathers. One day at Yinduuri I came upon a group of men engaged in a vehement argument. In the middle of the group was a man whose leg was badly

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

swollen with guinea-worm. It appeared that he had recently inherited his late brother's widow and her two children, a boy of about 16 or 17 and a girl of about 15. He had given this girl in marriage to a Sii man, but she had taken a dislike to him and had the previous day run back home again. Now the Sii man was anxious to make sure that the girl would be regarded as his legitimate wife. He feared that she would either be kept at home now, or else take the first chance of eloping with someone else. So he at once sent an intermediary with the prescribed placation gifts, and this emissary had just arrived. But this procedure was quite contrary to custom. The placation gifts must not be sent or accepted if the bride is at her father's house. The group of men was discussing the situation. It was in the course of this discussion that the girl's proxy father said that he could not take any decision without consulting her brother. 'He is a youngster (*bii*)', he said, 'and I own him. But he is the girl's brother. And you see that I am laid up with a bad leg. If I don't consult him, will he help me on the farm and do my errands for me?'

In using these mutual rights and duties as a sanction parents have the advantage over children. Within the limits of the inner lineage a father's payment of his son's bride-price is thought of as an obligation to the son. But as against the society at large it has an extra nuance. A son has no jural *locus standi*. He cannot get a wife unless his father is prepared to accept responsibility for the bride-price, even if he himself provides the means of payment. Thus Naaho, who was earning good wages, paid all the expenses of his courtship. He bought all the 'things' needed for marrying his wife by arrangement, as well as the two cows asked for her, out of his own pocket. But he was powerless to arrange the marriage by himself. He had to appeal to his father's brother, under whose paternal authority he was, to undertake this. It is true that it would be a most unusual thing for any man to refuse to take formal responsibility for his son in such a situation. But the mere fact that the latter cannot do without his assistance reinforces his authority over his son. Again, this consideration is of more importance for a proxy-father's authority than for the natural father's. It is the same, as has been observed earlier, with the ritual sanctions a proxy father commands.

We have spoken of the principle of reciprocity in the preceding paragraphs without attempting to define it. To do so it is necessary to take into account a wider context than the relations of parents and children. 593 577.

The principle of reciprocity or, more accurately, of equivalent returns[1] is implicit in the relations of parents and children. The natives see it as following on the mutual rights and duties of parents and children, and not as an explicit rule of conduct. There is a large voluntary element in

[1] I am indebted to Professor Radcliffe-Brown for this concept and for stimulus in appreciating its significance. I owe much, also, to Malinowski's *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, both here and elsewhere in this book.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

its working, as we have seen. Moreover, it applies equally to all members of a household and is implicit in all kinship and affinal relations. It arises out of common interests, mutual rights, and mutual obligations and is a way of giving expression to them. As these interests, rights, and obligations are of different kinds and degrees, corresponding to the differences in quality and degree of the relations involved, so there are different kinds and degrees of reciprocity. But all forms of equivalent returns have the general purpose of keeping social relations on a stable and mutual footing. The greater the field of common interests between persons, the less does deliberate calculation enter into the working of this principle. Hence the closer and more personal the relationship between people, the less formal is the rendering of equivalent returns for services or loans. Mutual services, between lineage segments, as, for instance, in the performance of one another's funeral ceremonies, are highly stereotyped. A son-in-law's services to his father-in-law must be immediately recompensed with food and drink. But between father and son, brother and brother, or husband and wife there is a continual give-and-take on a basis of all-in reciprocity. Equivalent returns cannot be demanded; it depends upon the good sense of the person concerned as to when and how he makes them, even in situations where custom lays down a definite norm. Meanness or selfishness in this respect gives rise to ill feeling and so to disharmony.

Tallensi sum up the observance of the principle of equivalent returns under the idea of debt (*samər*). Debts are goods or services accepted or requested on the definite understanding that they will be repaid and it is a maxim that debts never die (*sama pu kpira*). A man's heirs are liable for his debts.[1] Where equivalent returns are the customary mode of recompense, accepting goods and services is not a debt. A man 'borrows' (*pɛŋ*) money or a cow from a distant clansman and that is a debt; he 'takes' (*ʒaŋ*) or 'accepts' (*die*) his son's or wife's belongings if he needs them, and it is not a debt (*la ka samər*).

The most important criterion determining whether or not a particular service or gift or loan creates a debt is kinship. Members of a nuclear lineage and of an expanded family do not incur debts by borrowing from one another. The same rule applies to cognates whose kinship ties are as close as those of members of a nuclear lineage. If a man obtains something from his own mother's brother, for example, it is not a debt. This is definite. In theory there can be no debts either between members of the same inner lineage, or cognates whose kinship ties are as close as those of members of one inner lineage. What happens in practice

[1] Unless, as has been mentioned, they were not made a party to the debts at the time they were incurred or were not told of them by the debtor himself. The question of the procedures and sanctions that can be used to secure payment of a debt do not concern us here. One of the chief sanctions is public opinion. A defaulter finds it very difficult to borrow again.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

varies from case to case and from lineage to lineage. We have seen how this works out among the members of Ziŋgan biis. Another instance is that of Yinworəb and his 'son' (his grandfather's brother's great-grandson) Kadɛne. Yinworəb gave Kadɛne three shillings to pay the hearing fee when he was summoned to the chief's tribunal. This was not a debt. Three or four months later Yinworəb borrowed a goat from Kadɛne. Again, this was not a debt but it was tacitly understood to be an equivalent return for the loan of the three shillings. By contrast, Lɔyani used some sheep belonging to Maantiya, his father's half-brother's grandson and therefore his 'son'. This he regarded as a debt because the sheep were earmarked for the payment of Maantiya's wife's bride-price.

Outside the inner lineage, however, a debt is incurred by accepting goods or services from a clansman. The only exceptions are if the lender is also a matrilateral kinsman of the borrower—e.g. a uterine kinsman—or a close friend.

The principle of reciprocity, as seen in operation in the family and lineage, ties on to a more general theory of social action in Tale society. It is a particular application of the principle of equilibrium in the social system. The idea that in the long run mutual services or favours should balance is inherent in Tale social organization. Canalized by the lineage system, it means that a son or grandson or later descendant can make or expect equivalent returns for an action of his father or grandfather or earlier ancestor. It is a matter of pride as well as of moral or jural obligation to see that one benefit is balanced by another. For example, it is a common thing at an elder's funeral to see a distant clansman of his, who is not obliged to do so, bring a sheep or goat as a valedictory offering to the dead. The donor explains that there is a special reason for this offering. The deceased had been a friend of his father. When his father died the deceased brought a goat as a valedictory offering to his father. His goat is a return gift. The maxim that 'debts do not die' springs from this principle; and it applies not only to the relations of the living among themselves but to their relations with their departed ancestors. A grandson may have to atone for his grandfather's sins, as happened with Kuwaas. Years of constant ill luck were attributed by a succession of diviners to the sins of his paternal grandfather, whose name he bore. Kuwaas I, as Chief of Tongo, had betrayed his office by abandoning his clan and seeking only his personal safety once when the Hill Talis attacked Tongo. This was a grave sin against the ancestors, who demanded a large expiatory sacrifice, and until this was paid the sin would continue to lie heavily on the descendants of Kuwaas I. The right of self-help by raiding, and the notion that retaliatory warfare and retaliatory abduction of women are simply 'cancelling a debt (*kɛrɛg samər*)',[1] belong to the same category of ideas. The principle of reciprocity underlies all these categories of social behaviour.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 236, 245.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The Duty of Supporting the Parents in Old Age

818
• 517
593

Parents retain their rights and authority over their children throughout their lives. A man may be so senile that he can take no active part in household or public affairs. He is still the father of his children and the head of the household, the owner of the farms and livestock that belong to the household. Any of his sons living with him is automatically bound to farm for him. On this basis alone, and apart from the dictates of filial piety, an old man who has a son need not lack economic support. It is the same with an old woman who has a son. In her case, however, the stress is on the duty—a duty which is felt to be in part a privilege—of a son to care for his old mother, since she does not own any land.

An old man who has no adult sons need not necessarily lack food or shelter. He either has land of his own or can obtain some from a kinsman, and it is a question then of securing labour to work it. This, however, is no easy matter. Sporadic assistance can be obtained from kinsmen and neighbours, but it is impossible to get regular full-time labour. No one would go and work another man's farms for a whole farming season, either for a wage or as a kinship obligation. Thus an old man in this position is not likely to have more than the minimum of food and other necessaries. Tendaan Teroog was in this position. His only adult son was not living with him and he was dependent on others for the cultivation of his land. When his neighbours and kinsmen were too busy with their own farms to help him, his wife did the weeding in a rough-and-ready way. If it were not for the gifts of grain sent to him by his adult son from Mampurugu, Teroog and his family would have lived at starvation level right through the year. As it is they were just managing to subsist.

Cases like that of Teroog are not numerous, simply because the number of old men who are incapable of doing some work for themselves is small. In the whole of Tongo I knew only six old men (apart from chronic invalids) who were completely incapable of work. Another ten or fifteen (according to the criterion of efficiency employed[1]) could work, but would probably not have been able to support themselves and their wives without assistance.

A somewhat different and less frequent case is that of Sabaalug. He is an old bachelor living with his half-brother. But he does not help with the farming and so is not entitled to be supported by his brother. He keeps himself by 'scrounging' (*bimh*) a bit of food or a basket of millet, a few pence or an old garment from his matrilateral kinsmen and friends. A childless old woman like Tɔŋ, who lives with a 'son' of her long dead husband ekes out a poor existence in the same way. Tallensi are very

[1] Kuwaaa, for example, might have done much more work if he had not had two adult sons; Vɔŋraan-Tee would certainly have worked less if he had had a son to help him; Ta'aŋ spent so much time on ritual and communal affairs that he did less work on his farms than he was capable of.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

tolerant of such old folk, but they consider their mode of life a pitiable one, not so much from the purely material aspect as from the social side. 'Who will mourn his death? Who will give him a proper funeral?' they say. But such cases serve as examples for an argument they often put forward. I once heard it very well put in a comment on life in the coast towns. There, said the speaker, you starve if you have no money. Here, at home, no one need die of destitution. If he has no children he can always find a roof with a kinsman, either one of his close agnates or his mother's brother's people, and keep himself alive by the gifts of food he gets from kinsfolk and friends. Though a man is not bound to be over-generous, and he is not compelled to feed a kinsman living with him who does not contribute to the common pool, it is an offence against the ancestors to refuse food to a kinsman in straits.

Still rarer are instances of people who come to live with a daughter in their old age. I knew of only two cases, one that of an old man, the other of a woman. It is considered to be unbecoming for a man or woman to live with a married daughter. It is not compatible with 'in-lawship' (*deen*) and Tallensi say it causes friction. A married daughter contributes to her parents' material welfare indirectly. Her chief contribution is through the bride-price paid for her. A cow received for a daughter's bride-price may be the starting-point of the accumulation of more live-stock. In times of severe shortage a bride-price animal may be used to purchase grain and so save the family from starvation. Most important, however, is the use of a daughter's bride-price to pay off bride-price debts of her natal family. It helps, therefore, to add to the woman-power of her father's household upon which a large part of the household's productivity depends. The occasional assistance given to a man by his daughter's husband in farming, house-building, thatching, and so forth is a small item relatively to the total labour required to maintain a household, but it is enough to turn the scales in a difficult year. Many of the homesteads that were being built on the Tong Hills in 1936 would not have been completed that dry season if the owners' sons-in-law from other parts of the country had not come to their aid.

In short, a native's chief economic asset in old age (and this applies to sickness too) lies in the possession of sons, best of all own sons, but also proxy sons, that is, all those who have an interest in the patrimonial land which is for the time being in his keeping. As we already know, more distant 'sons' than those of the nuclear lineage are very unlikely to live with and work for a man whom they recognize as a classificatory father. Tallensi say that one of the reasons why sons are preferred to daughters is because they will farm for one when one is old. Women are even more apt than men to emphasize the insurance value of sons just because they are more dependent on a son's sense of moral obligation to care for them.

Yet Tallensi do not explicitly state it as one of the duties of a son to

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

support an old father economically. They assume support of an old father to follow automatically from the economic and jural relations of parents and children and from the moral obligations of filial piety. It is simply an aspect of co-operative production and joint consumption in the household under the household head's management, and a result of the principle of reciprocity. If a man's only son, for example, were living in his native settlement and refused to have his father or proxy father in his homestead, it would be a monstrous breach of ethics. He would lay himself open to immediate punishment by the ancestors; he would, indeed, be unable to participate in the life of the community since he could not act for himself in ritual or jural affairs.

This is an hypothetical instance, for I know of no such case. But nowadays the question of supporting an aged parent does occasionally arise when men emigrate from their native settlements to seek work abroad or to farm outside Taleland. Cases are occurring of men who stay away abroad and postpone their return home from year to year, leaving an aged parent to struggle on alone. They are far from numerous —I knew of some six or seven only, counting two cases where the sons had genuine grounds for their absence.

Native opinion about these absentees is illuminating. They are not criticized for neglecting to send money home regularly. Tallensi do not expect regular remittances from relatives working abroad and still tend to regard the occasional remittances that are sent home as windfalls. Absentee sons are censured rather for deserting their parents, for leaving them without the companionship and the social support of a son. Tendaan Teroog's son used to send baskets of guinea corn and maize to his father from Mampurugu. Nevertheless, the old man kept pressing him to return home; and when the son died suddenly people said it was because he had 'rejected' (*zaɣah*) his father. He should have come home long ago to be his father's companion (*kɔŋal*, vb.), to act for him in jural matters, assist him in ritual activities, and manage the household for him. The same sentiment was uppermost in Maantiya's mind when he explained why he could not leave his proxy father Saantarəba, though the latter was able to support himself and his wife with occasional assistance from kinsmen. Maantiya went down to the coast every dry season carrying fowls to sell and usually stayed away three or four months. He was always home again before the rains began. He said: 'I cannot abandon my father. He has no one else.' When I was going home in 1937 a number of men asked me to find their absent sons in Kumasi or Accra or elsewhere in the south, and to try to persuade them to return home. 'Tell them', said one old man, 'that we do not care about the money or things, but we want them to come home.'

We have said that there is a more definite emphasis on the duty of a son to provide for his mother. There was an old woman at Kpata'ar whose only son had been abroad for some years. She sent him many

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

888
593
577

messages begging him to return, but to no avail. 'That good-for-nothing', said Tiezien, contemptuously, telling me about this youth. 'He leaves his mother to starve here while he goes wandering abroad. He is no person (*u ka nit*).'[1]

This feeling that it is a son's bounden duty to support an aged mother is strongly marked in the case of one's own mother. It sometimes happens that a woman is widowed while still young and is left with one or two young children. She remarries into her late husband's clan and has children by her second husband. When she gets past child-bearing age, even if her second husband is still alive, she usually goes to live with her oldest son of the first marriage. Tallensi say that the right person to support such a woman is this son, as her second husband has no further interest in her after she ceases to be able to bear children.

Any surviving widow of one's own father or proxy father (i.e. a close co-wife of one's own mother) is felt to be entitled to support, but in this case a ritual sanction enters the picture. Tallensi say a man is bound to support his own mother 'because she bore you (*ɔn-n-dɔyi la xugu*)' It is a direct moral duty to her. But one has to support a mother's widowed co-wife because she was one's father's wife and he would be angry if one did not. This rule applies only to widows of fathers of one's own nuclear lineage. Outside that range no obligation is felt to support an old widow whom one's mother would have called her co-wife. It now becomes a question of more abstract ethical values summed up in the concept *dulɔm*. There is no exact equivalent for this concept in English. According to Tale ethics, any act of deliberate malice or even thoughtlessness that causes trouble or suffering to another person through no fault of his own is immoral. For example, deliberately giving a person wrong information that leads him into trouble; or refusing to give or lend a person something that can well be spared, and so causing him to suffer a serious loss; or if one is in a position to prevent a person getting hurt and makes no effort to do so—all such actions come into this category of moral delinquency. They incur *dulɔm*. The concept covers both the sufferer's resentment and the ethical stigma attaching to the wrong done to him by allowing evil to befall him. The native phrase is 'it brings (or is) *dulɔm* (*de mar dulɔm*)'; and *dulɔm* bears mystical retribution in its track.

Tallensi say that if an old woman whom one calls 'mother' (either because she is the widow of a classificatory father, or out of courtesy, because she belongs to one's mother's generation of wives of the clan) has no one to support her and appeals to one, it is *dulɔm* to refuse her. *Dulɔm* is one of the reasons why one cannot refuse food to a kinsman in need. It was the reason Kuŋaaŋba gave for allowing his old 'mother'

[1] This expression of contempt contains a wealth of meaning for the native. It means, broadly, someone who has no sense of decency or is oblivious of his social responsibilities.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

888 Tɔŋ to stay with him. Banɔrɔg furnished another instance. One afternoon he looked in on his way home from the market and found two
593 elders with me. He told us he was having some trouble with Ziba, a
●577 young man of his inner lineage. Ziba had an old woman, whom he called 'mother', living with him; but he had suddenly decided to get rid of her. Banɔrɔg told us how he had expostulated with the heartless young man. 'It is an evil thing to do', he concluded, amid murmurs of assent from the two elders. 'A man who drives out an old woman to starve becomes blameworthy before Heaven (*u kpera Naawun taale*); it is *dulɔm*.' Banɔrɔg's efforts, in this case, were in vain since he had no paternal authority over Ziba. The intervention of an older kinsman does not always check disgraceful treatment of domestic relatives, and public opinion only takes notice of it after the event and then often has no power to make the culprit remedy it.

A Methodological Point

593 181 The cases we have quoted in the preceding pages are précis of statements, opinions, and explanations given to me by Tallensi themselves. If space allowed, a score of cases could be quoted for each one I have recorded. I mention this because it might seem incredible, to anyone who has not lived amongst the Tallensi, that a people so primitive in their mode of livelihood should balance up rights and obligations in the most commonplace activities of their lives in so calculating a fashion. But the picture I have sketched is not a distortion. Description and analysis inevitably reduce human action to slow motion and men's motives to a seemingly mechanical pattern. In reality Tale parents commonly act as spontaneously and generously as parents in any other country and their children respond as spontaneously and sincerely. But even the most spontaneous actions and feelings of the natives occur within the framework of their social organization and subject to the values postulated in their culture. Social organization and cultural values allow of alternative forms of action and affect in any particular situation, but not of infinitely numerous alternatives. Where the relations of parents and children are involved these alternatives are not unlimited; and allowing for differences of personality and character, as the natives themselves do, we can say that the alternative that will be selected in a particular situation is determined by the structural relations of the individuals concerned. Men's motives and their social relations are closely integrated with one another among the Tallensi, as we have emphasized before. In their actual social behaviour Tallensi do not have to stop and think out every situation before they act. The individual's ideas and attitudes have been shaped by the social structure and the cultural norms. The framework of his social relations is as much a part of him as he is a part of it. He automatically evaluates every situation in terms of his social relations. To put it crudely, every Talɔŋ carries a set of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

and in sentiment, between oldest children and youngest children is of more than casual significance. It is as if the two major aspects of parent-child relations are split apart and distributed so as to make them more easily reconcilable. The mutual identification, mutual love and devotion of parents and children are focused in the relations of parents with their youngest children; the cleavage between successive generations is focused in the relations between parents and oldest children; and we can easily see why this is so. For it is the latter who will take the place of the parents on their death, who seem to be standing on the threshold waiting for them to die. The emphasis of the Namoos on first-born children is, as we have noted, due to the fact that it is the first-born child which makes a man and woman parents. Hence, if a first-born dies, its parents have to undergo a special purification rite; and a wife who has not borne a child to her husband does not undergo the purification rites for a widow when he dies. Later children do not change the role and status of a person in the same way; they do not make him or her more of a parent. Nor does the sex of the first-born matter, though the agnatic principle makes a first-born son of greater importance to a man than a first-born daughter. This and the principle of the equivalence of siblings explain why both sons and daughters are subject to the taboos of the first-born among the Namoos.

The Ancestors as Parent Images

The ambivalence in the relations of parents and children is more dramatically expressed in the ancestor cult than in any other aspect of Tale culture. We cannot discuss this at length here. We can only note that there is a direct continuity between the relations of parents and children in life and their relations after the parents' death. The worship of the ancestors is a culturally standardized projection on to the mystical plane of the tangle of attachments, reciprocities, tensions, and submerged antagonisms that bind parents and children to one another in life. Anyone unfamiliar with the speech and customs of the Tallensi would often find it impossible to tell, in some situations, whether a man is speaking of his living father or his dead father. The dead parents are the prototypes of all the ancestors. Distinctions of name and generation conceal the same primary images. This is clear from the fact that no man can sacrifice to an ancestor or ancestress except through the medium of the spirit of the parent who links him to that ancestor or ancestress.

It will not surprise the psychologist, however, to learn that the attributes with which the spirits of the parents are invested differ in some respects markedly from those that are conventionally assumed for living parents. The disciplinary limitations imposed by the demands of economic and social adjustment and by the rationale of reality are no longer operative. The figures of the dead parents are clothed in qualities that are in part highly magnified versions of their most praiseworthy qualities

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

in real life and in part distorted reflections of the tensions that exist between parents and children in reality. It is no misrepresentation to describe them as a standardized and highly elaborated picture of the parents as they might appear to a young child in real life—mystically omnipotent, capricious, vindictive, and yet beneficent and long-suffering; but the emphasis is far more on the persecuting than on the protecting attributes. The distortion is most striking in the case of a mother's spirit. All ancestor spirits are apt to reveal themselves more often by the misfortune they inflict than by the benefits they bring. They emerge as sanctions of conduct more by reason of the punishments they bring down on wrongdoers than because of the benefits they confer for right doing. But the spirits of female ancestors are believed to be specially hard, cruel, and capricious. This is remarkable when we consider the love and devotion a mother shows for her child throughout his life. As we have observed elsewhere,[1] there is a never-ending struggle between a man and his ancestors. It is psychologically rooted in the relations of parents and children during the lifetime of the parents. Sacrifices and prayers are reminiscent of the principle of reciprocity in the real relations of parents and children. They contain the same elements of acquiescence, justice, and hidden coercion. They show another aspect, though, in the propitiation, reverence, and gratitude they often express.[2]

We can see why filial piety towards the dead parents is more strongly stressed than towards the living. While he is alive a person's father has direct jural and ritual authority over him; when he dies, the father becomes the paramount sanction of moral conduct for him; and this applies, *mutatis mutandis*, in only a lesser degree to the mother. The oath 'by my father and his goatskin (or sheepskin) and his three cowries' discussed in our previous book[3] is one proof of this. The centre of gravity of the whole social system of the Tallensi is the relationship of father and son, and it is the idea of filial piety that keeps this relationship in balance in the face of all the forces that tend to divide father and son. In this as in other respects the Tallensi are typical of patrilineal and patriarchal societies of simple culture from many parts of the globe, both ancient and modern.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 145.

[2] As death, among the Tallensi, is always believed to be mystically caused by a particular ancestor spirit or a group of ancestor spirits (material causes such as sickness being recognized as necessary but not sufficient without the mystical adjunct), it follows that a dead father or mother can kill (*ku*) his or her own child. The converse is impossible, since children, in life, have no jurisdiction over parents. I have asked Tallensi if patricide ever occurs or is known to have occurred. My most trusted informants said they had never heard of a case and thought the very idea abhorrent beyond measure. The idea of matricide they considered even more vile and unnatural.

[3] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 66.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

responsible member of his society. Of this we have had ample evidence.[1] Again, there are strong economic elements in the individual's adhesion to the lineage. There is the pressure due to the form and organization of Tale economy as a whole, which tends to restrict excessive mobility. As Tallensi themselves often put it, shrewdly picking on the key item in their productive cycle, it is all a question of manure, including human excrement. A home farm in one of the old settlements kept at a high level of fertility by continuous manuring is not light-heartedly abandoned.[2] This fact, and the scarcity of unutilized and unowned farmland in the old settlements, puts a premium on the right to inherit land in them. To-day, it is true, the pressure of these forces has been relaxed by the opening up of an easily accessible external labour market and of facilities for trade both in Taleland and with other areas. These extraneous outlets have made life easier for the natives but they have not, as we have observed before, materially altered their traditional mode of livelihood. In fact they serve to emphasize the contention of the natives that economic motives are of secondary consequence in maintaining lineage unity.

It is not joint interest in, and equal rights to the inheritance of, their patrimonial lands which alone hold a group of brothers together. Men who leave their natal settlements on account of land shortage do not return home eventually only because they have at last inherited their patrimonial lands. The decisive sanction, as we have shown in an earlier chapter, lies in the obligation of filial piety and what it stands for in terms of the jural and ritual functions of the lineage. The focus of unity for every lineage is the authority of the father, either the real authority of the living father or the mystical supremacy of the dead father or his surrogate, an ancestor spirit. Men like Yinworəb and Da'amo'o gave up wage labour in Kumasi very reluctantly to return home because the death of their fathers left them at the head of their respective joint families, and other similar cases have been quoted in an earlier chapter (p. 179). Similarly, a group of brothers may be scattered, some at home, some in a peripheral settlement, some in Mampurugu, some working abroad. On certain ritual occasions those who are near enough make a point of returning home. Family funerals, in particular, bring the scattered members of the family together. The three chief mourners at Tɛndaan Gieŋ's funeral were his brothers' sons Gikoo-Duun, who lived near Sameni in Mampurugu, Saanbuohba, who had been farming near Tola on the Red Volta for some years, and Baŋ-Duun who had been living at Biuŋ for nearly twenty years. They all

[1] In preceding chapters as well as in *Dynamics of Clanship*, *passim*.

[2] We have touched on this subject in our earlier book, chapters i and xi. It is more fully considered in C. W. Lynn's report, *Agriculture in North Mamprussi* (Dept. of Agriculture, Gold Coast, Bulletin 34, 1937), and in M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, IX, 1936.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

spoke of their ancestral home at Zubiuŋ as their 'real home (*ti yir ni yɛlmɛŋər*)' to which they would all return sooner or later. Two years later, in fact, both Saanbuohba and Baŋ-Duun did return to Zubiuŋ.

As these examples show, though the solidarity of siblings derives its psychological content from the fact of their growing up together, its validity as a norm of social relations among siblings is a function of the total field of lineage relations. In other words, whatever the personal relations of siblings may be, their indestructible social bonds spring from their common jural and ritual relationship to their parents; and 'sibling' in this context stands not only for individuals but for lineages, while 'parent' stands for any ancestor that may be relevant in a particular situation.

We must add that the friction which sibling rivalry between brothers occasionally gives rise to does not come to an end with their economic and residential separation. Self-interest among Tallensi provokes clashes of personality and of rights as much as anywhere else in the world. Tallensi say that the gravest disputes between brothers of the same nuclear lineage arise over land, though such disputes are very rare. Unlike the petty squabbles of day-to-day life, they are apt to end in blows and even bloodshed. I heard of several instances that had occurred during the previous thirty years, but only one came to my notice during my stay among the Tallensi. It was, however, a typical case. When Gunyam died, his sons Taagbin and Zayahkpɛmɔre inherited his lands and chattels, with Taagbin, the oldest son, as the senior heir. Taagbin allocated a portion of their late father's home farm to his younger brother. But the latter objected that he was being unfairly treated. The dispute ended in a fight in which Zayahkpɛmɔre was injured in the hand. Public opinion was severely critical of Zayahkpɛmɔre; for, as a Tale saying goes, an older brother who inherits his father's property and position is like one's father and should be treated with similar respect. But, as an elder of their section shrewdly pointed out when we were discussing this case, stupid as he is reputed to be, Zayahkpɛmɔre would never have raised his hand against Taagbin if the latter had been his proxy father and not his brother. Brothers quarrel just because they have equal rights in relation to one another.

There are two offences, however, which irrevocably disrupt the bonds of brotherhood if one brother commits either of them against another. As we have previously stated, it is a grave sin for a man to seduce the wife of a brother of the same inner or medial lineage. If this happens, the Tallensi say, the injured man and the culprit 'will never eat together again, will never sacrifice together again'. Because of this taboo a man may not sit on the same sleeping-mat as his brother's wife. 'It is as if he wanted to sleep with her', the natives say. Hence, also, it is considered to be improper for a man to address his brother's wife while he is alive as wife (*pɔŋa*), though he may speak of her to non-members

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

593 554 covers almost every standard social relationship of siblings in Tale society. Siblings are laterally identified with one another, so to speak; brothers can replace one another in the social structure in a way that gives rise to a minimum of readjustment in the social relations of any other people affected. This contrasts with the vertical identification of parent and child, which rests on the continuity of the descent line not on actual or potential identity of social roles. This is a generalized formula. It leaves out of account a very important item, the effect of the sexual dichotomy of Tale culture. The distinctive social roles imposed on men and women by this factor restrict the identification of brother and sister to a narrow sphere, and the functions of women limit the social equivalence of sisters to their relationship with each other's children.

593 855 ●577 In infancy and childhood the equivalence of siblings is of little consequence. It comes out chiefly in the rule that parents should not discriminate between their children (proxy children as well as own children). Tallensi say that, in practice, one cannot help preferring one son to another or one daughter to another. One child may be more obedient or industrious or better tempered than his brothers and sisters, so one will be inclined to favour him; and there is the admitted bias in favour of younger children, especially the youngest, as we have seen. Moreover, proxy children are rarely as dear to the heart of a parent as own children are. Even a mother, whose love for all her children (except the youngest) is proverbially without bias, sometimes has favourites among them. There is plenty of evidence for these admissions. The Chief of Tongo had well over two-score children; among them his favourites were a son and a daughter of about 18, born soon after he was appointed chief. Nor do such preferences stop with childhood. Tiezien reposed his trust in his late brother's two sons, who had grown up in his care. The only son he had of his own who was old enough to assist him in public affairs was, he said good humouredly, too stupid.

But, say the Tallensi, this is a matter of *feelings*—what 'your heart desires (*i suh mboot*)'. When it is a matter of *rights*, to discriminate between children is bad, almost sinful; it is like rejecting one child for the sake of another. It would be regarded as iniquitous for a man to let some of his children go hungry while others were well fed. With two adult sons, as we have seen, it is considered right for both of them to be assisted to marry before either is allowed to have two wives. It is the same with other things in which there is an element of right or duty; and the majority of natives are very conscientious in this matter, at least as far as their own children are concerned. Nowadays, in particular, as has often been emphasized to me, if a man has two sons and does not deal with them equally, the one who feels himself unjustly treated soon finds an opportunity for running away to seek work abroad. Sensible parents follow this rule conscientiously even in trivial matters. Omara

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

had two little daughters, aged about 3, by different wives. One day the two children appeared very proudly each wearing a strip of cotton print about the waist. Omara explained that he had bought them these 'skirts', which had to be exactly the same in size and pattern. Had they been different in colour or size, or had he bought the children different presents, they would have been very upset and their mothers angry. He would have been accused of discriminating between them.

As this instance suggests, the closer children are in age or parentage or both the more should they be treated alike. The limiting case is that of twins and this deserves a special note. Twins (*leeba*)[1] are not greeted with joy among the Tallensi; but they are not destroyed; nor are they regarded as sacred in any circumstances; nor is the mother subject to moral censure or ritual penalties. But no woman desires to bear twins. One of the most efficacious medicines that can be placed in a ground-nut plot or among *ma'ana* (*Hibiscus esculentus*), *bet* (*H. sabdariffa*), or *bɛris* (*H. cannabinus*) plants—all of which supply favourite ingredients for sauces[2]—to prevent women from pilfering these crops is the medicine of twins (*leeba teem*) used in purifying the parents of twins. Anyone who defies this charm will have twins, it is said. I have seen women run on catching sight unexpectedly of a twin medicine charm dangling in a farm.

Tallensi believe that twins may not be 'human (*ninvoo*)'—i.e. complete social beings—at birth. As soon as they are born, a man who owns twin medicine is asked for medicine to mark their sleeping-place. If one or both die shortly after birth that is proof positive that he or they are *kɔlkpaaris*, malicious bush sprites, not human beings. They are then buried ignominiously in a special uninhabited place. A twin that survives the first month or so of life is tacitly assumed to be human and treated as an ordinary child. But if it dies in early infancy it may still prove to have been a *kɔlkpaarəg*, when the cause of its death is sought by divination. Its death will cause great distress to its parents, for it will have been treated with as much affection and devotion as a normal child, but it will not receive normal burial. Only when it reaches the age of about 4 [i.e. is old enough to have a following sibling (*nyeer*)] and is placed under the spiritual guardianship of an ancestor spirit, is a twin definitely regarded as a complete social being.

Tallensi seem to expect, as a matter of course, that at least one of a pair of twins will die in very early infancy.[3] The survivor then has to be

[1] They are always named *Yin* (Heaven) for the older and *Zuur* (tail) for the younger—*Yin*, 'because he sees the light of day first'; *Zuur* 'because he comes last'.

[2] *Vide* previously cited paper 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', by M. and S. L. Fortes.

[3] I can state with absolute certainty that every effort is made to keep twins alive. But the natives assert that the sheer physical strain of nursing and caring for twins is too much for most women. This is highly probable considering that

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

by his clansmen as a classificatory kinsman, and predispose *ahɔb* and *ahɔŋ* to greater mutual confidence, than if one's *ahɔb* belongs to the traditionally hostile Talis. On the other hand, a man whose mother's brother is at Wakii does not wish evil to befall that clan, and he may find himself in an embarrassing position if there is conflict between his own clan and that clan.

602

Kinship Amity

Outside situations in which specific extra-clan kinship ties correlated to defined modes of conduct emerge, the social relations of kin are governed by a general rule of amity. A kinsman of any degree is a person in whose welfare one is interested and whom one is under a moral obligation to help in difficulties, if possible. A good illustration of this occurred one day when I was on a visit to Kpata'ar. Nyaaŋzum asked, in the customary way, what was the news from Tongo. I ran through the conventional items—the chief, the crops, current gossip, births, marriages, and deaths. When I told him that Gben-Tɔŋ's mother had died he exclaimed, 'Eee! And why haven't I been told? I'll have it out with Gben-Tɔŋ next time I see him. This is his maternal ancestors' home (*u yaab yir nla*). I sacrifice on his behalf so that he may sleep peacefully; and now that he is not sleeping well (i.e. has trouble), if he does not send to tell me, is that as it should be?' Thus also Banɔrɔg complained that he had given away about twenty baskets of grain in a period of one month after his harvest to kinsfolk who had come to 'beg (*soh*)' gifts to tide them over a time of food shortage. But, he concluded, 'you can't refuse a kinsman (*i ku tuo nzaŋah i dɔŋam la*). One day I myself may have to go and ask my kinsmen for some grain.' A kinsman in need of hospitality cannot be refused, though there is no obligation to go out of one's way to persuade him to accept it. In the old days if a person saw anyone wantonly molesting a kinsman of his from another clan, it was his duty to intervene. It is wrong to seek a kinsman's harm and a sin that will bring down the wrath of the ancestors to cause his death. In 1936 the Tɔŋraana and the Gɔlibdaana were compelled to meet in order to try to settle one of the latter's grievances against the former. At the end of the long and fruitless discussion the Tɔŋraana burst out, with scarcely veiled vexation, 'You and I, Gɔlibdaana, are kin. We have begotten each other. Why do you seek my enmity always?'

602
577

As we have previously learnt, one of the most important duties of kinship in the old days was to protect a kinsman in one's own clan territory. A typical example is the story of Banam-Teroog's journey to Sandema in the Builsa country, some fifty or sixty years ago. Had he gone openly by himself he would certainly have been caught and sold into slavery by the Builsa. He had been commanded by an ancestress, through a diviner, to go to her home in Builsa country and perform the

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

rites of setting up a shrine dedicated to her. For safety's sake all the travelling on such journeys was always done at night. During the day the traveller lay low in a kinsman's house. So Teroog set off one night. He went first to his father's mother's brother's home at Gorogo. Thence he was escorted to his father's mother's mother's natal home at Sii. The Sii people took him to a more remote kinsman at Balung and from there he was conducted, by similar stages, to Sandema. His return journey was made in the same way. The whole trip took nearly a month. The same journey can be done on foot, nowadays, in three or four days each way.

Similarly Zubiuŋ men relate how in the old days their Tongo neighbours, being of a different and unconnected clan,[1] used sometimes to raid their livestock to recover bride-price debts. As the people of Tongo were much more numerous than those of Zubiuŋ resistance was generally impossible. But if a Zubiuŋ man had a close matrilateral or affinal kinsman at Tongo, this afforded him some protection. His kinsman would intercede to get any livestock of his that had been seized restored to him, or, if the debtor were a very close agnate of his, to arrange a settlement between creditor and debtor. Often the head of an intercalary lineage, such as Nəŋsuur yidem,[2] undertook this on behalf of his classificatory mother's brother's lineage.

Nowadays the most important obligations extra-lineage kin have towards one another are in ritual matters, and these are unavoidable obligations. This applies especially to kin of a senior generation in relation to those of a junior generation. A person owes ritual allegiance to his matrilateral ancestors as well as to his paternal ancestors. In fact, in the strictly personal affairs of the individual, his matrilateral ancestors have as decisive a role in his life as his patrilineal ancestors. This accords with the recognition given to maternal origin in the social structure and with the rule that kinship never dies out. Hence there are many occasions in the life of a man when he has to go to his mother's brother or to someone standing in that order of relationship to him to ask him to sacrifice on his behalf. For it must be remembered that the canon of agnatic descent prohibits anyone other than a true patrilineal descendant from sacrificing to an ancestor or ancestress. Thus if a man wants to sacrifice to his mother's spirit guardian he has to go to her natal home and ask her father (or his heir) to perform the sacrifice. Herein lies the force of the statement commonly used to define extra-clan kinship ties, 'I sacrifice on his behalf', or 'he sacrifices on my behalf'. The whole weight of the ancestor cult stands behind these and other ritual obligations of extra-clan kin to one another and no Talən would violate them.

If we add to this the rule that marriage between extra-clan kin of any degree is forbidden, we can see that there is much in common between

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vi.
[2] Cf. ibid., pp. 59 and 78.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

sion to go, saying that the quarrel between the two clans had nothing to do with the question of personal kinship ties. As this example shows, there is a strong element of moral (but not jural) compulsion in the respect owed by a sister's son to his mother's brother, and the sanction behind it is the allegiance every man owes to his maternal ancestors.

On the level of sentiment and affective attitudes there is clearly a close resemblance between the relationship of mother's brother and sister's child and that of father and child. The difference, and it is a fundamental difference, lies in the fact that *ahəb* and *ahəŋ* have no common economic or jural interests. Thus a man can be familiar with all the affairs of his *ahəb* or *ahəŋ* and be keenly concerned that they should go well, but he is under no responsibility for their satisfactory outcome. The tension underlying the relationship of father and son is absent, and in this important respect the relationship of *ahəb* and *ahəŋ* resembles that of mother and child more closely. An *ahəb* must be respected by and he has considerable moral authority over his *ahəŋ*; but he cannot demand obedience from him as of right. This will be clearer from what follows.

Here it is pertinent to ask why the mother's brother and not her father—though he is the head of her natal family—holds the key position in the network of social relations that bind a person to his mother's patrilineal kin. As our analysis makes clear, it follows from the interaction of the principle of the equivalence of siblings and the principle of the cleavage between successive generations. A person cannot identify himself with his mother in relation to her father. He cannot have the status of a son and the status of a grandson in relation to the same person. On the other hand, as the preceding discussion makes clear, it is in conformity both with the logic of the social structure and with the pattern of sentiments uniting parent and child, for a person to extend to his mother's brother the filial attitude he has towards his mother. He can consistently be his mother's son and at the same time have a quasi-filial status in relation to her brother.

The Place of Gifts in the Relations of Ahəb and Ahəŋ

An *ahəb* demonstrates his interest in his sister's son's well-being by the gifts (*piim*) he occasionally gives him. The theory is that they are given freely out of kinship amity. By the rule of reciprocity there should be a similar freely-given flow of gifts and services from *ahəŋ* to *ahəb*, but the emphasis lies on the generosity of the *ahəb*. A man is under no jural or ritual obligation to give things to his sister's child; he does so voluntarily as a quasi-paternal gesture. And though an *ahəŋ* has no property rights in the lineage or clan of his *ahəb*, he is, in theory, allowed certain liberties with things belonging to them, as if he were a kind of son of the clan. This is explained by the formula that but for the accident of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

604 425 partly because Ɔmara's relationship was with the whole inner lineage, not with Dawoog personally, the request had to be placed before the assembled elders of the inner lineage. The land could not have been granted without their unanimous consent. This having been obtained, a day was fixed for handing over the land. Early in the morning of the appointed day Ɔmara, followed by his oldest son, arrived bringing a [782] fowl and a guinea-fowl and a large basket of guinea corn. Dawoog then summoned all the men of his inner lineage, and proceeded to sacrifice the birds to his lineage ancestors at the lineage *bɔɣar*. Addressing the ancestors he explained all the circumstances of their 'grandson' Ɔmara's request and exhorted them to bless his labour and to grant that the new farm might bring him prosperity. It was a long prayer detailing exactly how Ɔmara was related to Dawoog's lineage and promising that he would bring further offerings in gratitude to the *bɔɣar* whenever the new farm produced good crops. The flesh of the birds was divided amongst all present, including Ɔmara, in accordance with the customary rules.

Ɔmara and his son, accompanied by two young men and an elder of the *ahɔb yiri* deputed by Dawoog, then repaired to the bush-farm. The elder showed Ɔmara the boundaries of the farm and the young men hoed a strip along one boundary to symbolize marking them out (*kyie*). They then set to, with the aid of Ɔmara and his sons, to hoe a small patch, and so symbolically to hand over the right of working the farm. This was symbolized, also, in a simple rite in which the elder handed Ɔmara a large pellet of soil from the farm, mixed with a handful of the flour used in the sacrifice to the *bɔɣar*, to eat.

The procedure was identical in the case of Sɔmbura, with one exception. The land belonged to his *ahɔb* Sayamane's nuclear lineage, so there was no need to obtain the consent of the elders of his inner lineage. Sayamane did, however, inform them because, as he put it, 'you cannot [577] undertake so important a transaction without the knowledge of your "brothers" and "fathers", and besides, telling them makes them witnesses to the act'. It means that there will always be some member of the inner lineage who knows the circumstances and conditions of the gift.

604 577 425 Tallensi attach very great importance to the ritual steps in this transaction. They secure the blessing of his matrilateral ancestors for the recipient of the land. Without this, they believe, failure and even disaster would overtake him when he starts farming the new bush-farm; for, they say, the land really belongs to the ancestors who first cultivated it. Moreover, the ritual formalities also have an explicitly stressed jural function. It is a solemn covenant between the parties, made in the presence of the ancestors, in which all those who have rights in the land avow their consent to the gift and the recipient pledges himself to abide by the implicit conditions of the tenure of the land. The arrangement

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

has the sanctions of the ancestor cult behind it, and the guarantee of having been made with the public consent of all who have an interest in the land.

The recipient pays no rent or dues for the land. During the first three or four years he must give a basket of guinea corn or millet to the grantors after every harvest. If he has had good crops it will be a large basketful; if he has had a poor season it will be a small basket. In subsequent years he need only bring a gift of grain if his crops are good and if he wishes to do so. Some of this grain will be ground into flour and a libation poured to his matrilateral ancestors at their *bɔŋar*, expressing thanks for their beneficence. This serves also to reaffirm the ownership of the land by the grantors. Occasionally, too, he may bring a fowl to offer at the ancestral *bɔŋar* of his *ahɔb* lineage in gratitude for the beneficence of the ancestors whose land he is working.

In principle, the lineage that grants the land can recover use of it at any time by giving the recipient a year's notice. But this right would only be exercised, in practice, if the latter offends them in any way—for instance, by withholding the gifts of grain in spite of having excellent crops. As a rule, therefore, the *ahɔŋ* retains the use of the land until he no longer requires it. It then reverts automatically to its proper owners. If the original recipient dies, his son may continue to use the land without specially renewing the arrangement with his *ahɔb yidɛm*.

Now supposing the farm is so large that the recipient need not cultivate all of it at one time. By cultivating and fallowing different portions of the farm in rotation he and his sons after him may keep it in use continually. If this goes on for two generations, by which time all the individuals who were present in person at the original transaction are probably dead, the land passes into the effective ownership of the original recipient's lineage, in the third generation. The successors of the original grantor no longer have the right of recovering the land but they are still the nominal owners of the land. If it is wholly abandoned they may resume occupation; the users may not sell the land; and if they grossly offend the nominal owners, the latter can, in theory, turn them off it.

This right is most emphatically claimed, though it is, by all accounts, very rarely exercised. An incident concerning Ɔndieso is suggestive of what might happen. Ɔndieso quarrelled with his neighbour and the head of his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's lineage, the Gbizug Tɛndaana. The latter, in his anger, ordered Ɔndieso to leave the land he was farming. This land had been given to Ɔndieso's grandfather by his mother's brother, the then Gbizug Tɛndaana. Ɔndieso, previously defiant, was filled with dismay. Not to comply with the tɛndaana's demand meant risking both the wrath of his matrilateral ancestors and the vengeance of the Earth whose cult is so closely bound up with Gbizug. So he went across to Deemzeet, the head of Puhug section of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

on the charity of his kinsmen and friends. The Gbizug Tendaana refused to promise anything in advance. When at length Puvolimra succeeded in persuading his prospective father-in-law to give him the girl, all the formalities were carried out by his paternal relatives at Kpatia. Then came the question of bride-price. The demand was made to the head of Puvolimra's inner lineage at Kpatia, who transmitted it to Puvolimra himself, since his 'father' was obviously unable to meet it. It was then that the Gbizug Tendaana made Puvolimra a present of a bull, without, however, assuming any responsibility for handing it over to Puvolimra's father-in-law. The situation was saved for the time being; but that dry season Puvolimra went, for the first time in his life, to seek work abroad, hoping thus to earn enough to buy another bull to give to his in-laws.

Sometimes, however, a mother's brother accepts responsibility for the bride-price of the wife of his sister's son who has grown up as his foster-son. A curious situation arises then. For this amounts to adopting the *ahəŋ* into the inner lineage of the *ahəb*. It is as if his mother's bride-price is paid back to his paternal lineage so that he becomes a son of his mother's brother's lineage—much like an illegitimate son. And this is symbolically shown by his children being entrusted to the care of spirit guardians from among his mother's brother's ancestors instead of his paternal ancestors. Though he does not acquire rights of inheritance in his adoptive lineage, the *ahəŋ* settles permanently in the clan settlement of his *ahəb*. He retains only ritual ties with his paternal clan. This is one of the ways in which accessory lineages are founded in clans to which they are related as *ahəŋ* to *ahəb*. At Gbeog, for instance, there are two homesteads occupied by the sons and grandsons of a Gorogo man who came to live with his mother's brother and settled there when the latter paid the bride-price for his first wife. In ritual matters these men still belong to Gorogo. They keep the totemic taboos and funeral customs of Gorogo. When there is a death in their families their Gorogo clansmen come to bury the dead and celebrate the funeral. When the Great Festivals arrive they join with their Gorogo clansmen in celebrating them. But in another two or three generations it is quite possible that their lineage will become an established accessory lineage of Gbeog.

The corollary to the foregoing is that a person's patrilineal kin do not forfeit their rights over him merely because he has grown up in the care of his mother's brother. These rights are often jealously guarded. For example, Nabil, a lad who lived with his mother's brother, one day killed a hare. Instead of delivering the carcass to the head of his own nuclear lineage, as he was bound to do by custom, he brought it home to his *ahəb*. The latter divided the bulk of it amongst the constituent segments of his own inner lineage and sent only one hind-leg to Nabil's 'father'. His reaction was an indignant protest, backed by the other

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

members of his inner lineage, at what he called the deliberate flouting of his rights as *biiraan*, owner of the child. A long squabble between the two lineages followed which eventually petered out in a compromise. This may seem a storm in a teacup; it was taken very seriously by a dozen Tale elders.

The outstanding example of the retention of patrilineal rights is found in the case of a girl who grows up at her *ahəb yiri*. Whatever her personal relations with her father's lineage may be, it is they who receive the placation gifts and the bride-price when she marries. The *ahəb*'s share is only the 'cow of rearing'.

Cases of girls living as foster children at their *ahəb yiri* up to marriageable age are uncommon. I knew of only one girl who was living with her *ahəb* and would probably not be taken back by her father's people before she reached marriageable age. A girl living with her mother's brother is usually there because she was sent to her maternal grandmother in early childhood owing to the death of her mother. She may be left there until she is 11 or 12, but she is then generally fetched by her father's people. A boy has more freedom. He cannot be forced to return to his paternal home if he does not wish to do so.

An interesting reflection of the conventional ideas on the relations of an *ahəb* and his foster *ahəŋ* is found in the story commonly told of how certain politico-ritual offices came to be transferred from one clan to another. The tale is so stereotyped that it can be regarded as a standard myth. It is alleged of several of the lesser chiefships that they were originally vested in different clans from those that now hold them—usually clans that are closely related to the present holders by local or ritual ties. The last chief of the original line, the myth relates, had his sister's son, a member of the clan now holding the chiefship, living with him. The chief put great trust in his *ahəŋ*; and, either because he had no sons or because his sons were indifferent to politico-ritual affairs, the chief always delegated his *ahəŋ* to represent him. Thus, he used to send the *ahəŋ* as his messenger whenever he had to communicate with the senior chief who was the elector to that chiefship. In this way the *ahəŋ* became known to the elector. When his *ahəb* died he hastened stealthily to the elector with the news, taking lavish gifts along with him. Knowing him so well from their previous contacts and persuaded by the rich gifts he brought, the elector thereupon immediately conferred the chiefship on him. Thus the chiefship came into the possession of its present holders. A similar story is told to explain the dominant position of the lineage of Lakum yiri in the politico-ritual structure of Ba'ari, in spite of their being an attached lineage.[1]

When it is pointed out that such actions are contrary to custom and would not be allowed at present, the natives have two answers. Firstly, they say, unscrupulous people never hesitate to break a customary rule

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 88.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

(*Pa m-biiga? Nyɛn ni i tau n-kab dɔɣa bii, pa nyɛnmi biig n-a u?*)'. As will be remembered, men quote the same maxim when they are asked why mother's brother and sister's son are generally so attached to each other. In support of this Tallensi usually quote two customs. Firstly, when an old woman dies, the oldest of her brothers' sons has his head shaved in mourning, as if for his father. He represents all his siblings, Tallensi say, in this act of filial respect. Secondly, a *ba-pɔk* has the power of pronouncing a curse against a child of her brother. She can, conversely, withdraw a curse pronounced by her brother if he dies without having done so, and if he has no surviving brother of the same nuclear lineage. But the social equivalence of a woman with her brother in relation to his children is limited by her sex. She is barred from exercising the jural and ritual authority and the rights of a father. In fact, the tendency is for her to look up to her brother's son as the future heir of her brother and the potential repository of authority in the affairs of her lineage.

Two examples will suffice to show how limited in fact are the jural rights a woman has in relation to her brother's children. They have principally a token value. When a funeral is being celebrated by a woman's husband's nuclear lineage her close lineage kin send a party of mourners to bear their condolences to the lineage of their lineage-in-laws. The party includes a number of young girls whom the woman calls her sisters and daughters. Before they leave again for home these young girls are gathered together and surrounded by a crowd of young men of the host clan. Amid laughter and good-humoured teasing the girls are invited to choose a 'future husband' each from among the young men. It is all a game, part of the hospitality accorded to the visitors. The selected 'husband' has to give a parting gift to the girl who has chosen him, so that she shall go home pleased with her visit. Among these girls might be a daughter of one of the woman's brothers of the same nuclear lineage. If the woman is particularly interested in the young man this girl selects, she may declare publicly that she is giving him the girl as his wife. Everybody pretends to accept this declaration as if it came from the girl's father, but in fact everybody knows that it has only a token significance and no jural force whatever.

Again, if a woman deserts a husband to whom she has been given by her father without having previously arranged to go to another man, she very often takes refuge with a *ba-pɔk*. There she is, so to speak, under a parent's protection but not subject to her father's authority. She knows that her *ba-pɔk* will sympathize with her and cannot in any case force her to return to the man she has left. Her father, satisfied that she is in parental care, will not seek to put pressure on her, at least for some time. However, a girl in this position soon attracts suitors, though courtship has to be clandestine, for she is still formally the wife of another man. But sometimes a suitor succeeds in ingratiating himself with the *ba-pɔk* and persuades her to connive at an elopement, a thing

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

604 which a father would never do. In theory, this means that the *ba-pɔk* consents to the new marriage. In practice, her action has no binding
586 force on her brother. This rule applies also to an unmarried girl who is
587 given in marriage by her *ba-pɔk*. A woman might have one of her brother's daughters living with her as a nursemaid for her baby. She might promise the girl as a wife to one of her husband's brothers. But her brother need not consider himself bound by this promise if he has objections to the marriage.

604 A father's sister is, in short, a kind of female 'father', but without the jural and ritual attributes of fatherhood. A father's sister must be
577 treated with respect. It would be grossly improper, for example, to joke with her as one jokes with a wife's sister; and to strike or abuse her, even if she were much younger than oneself, would be a sin. But the respect accorded to her is only a pale reflection of the attitude implicit in filial piety. It is much more a matter of etiquette than of emotion, as if it were merely conventional and not evoked by a feeling of moral obligation.

604 A marked characteristic of a person's relations with his or her father's sister is the absence of specific mutual obligations. Just as a *ba-pɔk* has in reality no rights over her brother's children, so she has no specific duties of either a ritual or a secular kind towards them, or they to her. This is the chief contrast between this relationship and that of parent and child or that of mother's brother and sister's child. Only a shadow of a ritual sanction comes into the relationship, in the form of the belief that the curse of a *ba-pɔk* can harm her brother's child, and in the notion that she stands under the protection of the same ancestors as the latter. Hence, though she cannot demand services from her brother's child, it is felt that a request for help from her should be met, even at the cost of
[788] some inconvenience. If a person offends his father's sister and she reproaches him saying, 'I bore you (identifying herself with her brother) and this is how you treat me. My ancestors have seen it, my fathers have seen it (*Man dɔɣi la·k-i cɲɔm là ɲwala; n-yaanam nyeya, m-banam nyeya*)', this has the force of a curse because she is invoking her ancestors who are also his ancestors. Such a curse would disturb a native, but not nearly so deeply as a father's curse or if a mother's brother refused to sacrifice on his behalf.

Because their relationship is devoid of a definite jural coefficient and is not subject to organized ritual sanctions; because, also, a father's sister stands outside the scheme of economic and domestic associations in which the relationship of parent and child is set, the relations of father's sister and brother's child are free of the undercurrent of tension found in those of father and child. A woman's bonds with her brother's children are fundamentally bonds of sentiment. That is why they seldom endure beyond one generation, or extend beyond the nuclear lineage.

The personal relations of father's sister and brother's child have much

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

861 At the same time, no one hesitates to punish when it seems to be merited. A child who neglects a task entrusted to him or her may expect to be rebuked or even chastised. Incidents such as the following occur frequently. Strolling through Puhug one morning in June when the early millet was ripening, I stopped to chat with Tampoyar, a young man of 25 or so. Suddenly there came the sound of furious railing from his father's house-top. 'Your ears don't listen. Can't you look after your cattle properly, you good-for-nothings, you things-with-sunken-eyes....' A voice from a neighbouring house-top joined in to the same effect, adding: 'I'll come down and thrash you.' The objects of these fulminations were two small boys, about 9–10 years, who were driving some cattle out to pasture. They were dawdling and their beasts stopped to munch at the millet. The rebuke had the desired effect. Tampoyar's comment was to point to a scar on his body where for the same crime he had been so severely whipped, as a small boy, that a suppurating wound resulted.

Disciplinary punishment is also administered at times. A small boy is told to go and scare the birds from the fields. He refuses. A hard smack on the haunches sends him scampering.

Nevertheless, I have never observed vindictive punishment or malicious bullying, either of children by adults or of young children by older ones. Indeed, punishment appeared to me to be extremely rare among the Tallensi, as compared with ourselves. It is thought to be necessary sometimes to use rough measures in teaching morals and manners, but not in teaching skills. A very intelligent elder once declared *nyen pu mugx ibii la u ku ŋoya yam*, 'If you don't harass your child, he will not gain sense.' This view is held by many. But, as the context of conversation showed, what he meant was not so much corporal punishment as that constant supervision is necessary in the training of children for life.

● 577 *The concept of 'yam'.* Tallensi often use the concept *yam* when discussing social behaviour. It corresponds to our notion of 'sense' when we refer to a 'sensible man', or 'sound common sense'. As the Tallensi use the term it suggests the quality of 'insight'. Its range of usage is wide. If it is said of some one *u mar yam pam*, 'he has a great deal of sense', the implication is that he is a man of wisdom, or is intelligent, or experienced in affairs, or resourceful. If some one

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

commits a *faux pas*, or shows lack of understanding, or misbehaves morally the comment is *u ka yam*, 'he has no sense'. The concept is used to refer both to qualities of personality and to attributes of behaviour. It is applied also in a genetic sense to describe the social development of the child. A normal child between the ages of about 6 and 9 years is said to 'have sense at length'. It knows how to behave in the social situations which confront it, whereas an infant of 3 or 4 years old does not. Yet a 4-year-old having learned bladder and bowel control is said to 'have sense' as compared with a 2-year-old. Similarly Nindɔyat, (17–18 years) telling me of his sweethearting, waxed scornful about his own boyish friendship with girls two years before. 'I still had no sense then', he explained. The concept, it will be seen, is generally used relatively to a particular situation.

Children's attitude to education. In Tale society every pupil becomes in some situations a teacher. At the one extreme there are specialized ritual performances which some men do not learn till they are grey, and at the other, the toddler leaning over to play with his nursling brother is teaching the latter something about his environment. This holds right through the age-scale. Considering also the unity of the social sphere, one is not surprised to find that children have the same attitudes about education as their elders. Hence children are rarely unwilling to learn. As a rule, too, they are not ashamed of confessing failure, ignorance, or inability to do or make something. Conversely, children laugh good-humouredly at one another's deficiencies in skill or knowledge, they never jeer. Ridicule is reserved for the correction of uncouth manners, disgraceful morals, or aberrant interests.

Fundamental educational relationships. It will be evident from the preceding analysis that Tale children receive their education not only from the adults but also from older children and adolescents who are always transmitting what they know of the cultural heritage to their younger brothers and sisters and cousins. From the age of 5 or 6 years until they become fully absorbed into the economic system children often go about in small groups. These groups[1] usually consist of

[1] See M. Fortes, 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', in *Custom is King*, 1936, for ancillary information about these groups. Also M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, ix, 1936, for an outline of their structural context.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

used always to milk the cow during the day, in the pasture, when he became hungry; but if he was not going to be allowed to do this because the white man must be supplied with milk, he would no longer drive the cow out to graze.

Increasing skill and maturity, therefore, bring increasing responsibilities but also concomitant rewards—that is, ever closer integration into the system of co-operation and reciprocity which is the basis of Tale domestic economy.[1] The unity of the social sphere, the interest of children in the world of adult activities, and the rapidity with which each advance in educational achievement is socially utilized constitute a ring of incentives which help to explain the eagerness of Tale children to grow up and take their full place in adult life.

Observances. Finally, there are the observances which every Talaŋa has to learn in the course of his or her life. These comprise ritual, moral and ethical values, norms and obligations, as well as rules of etiquette and standards of correct conduct in general. Some of these types of observances can be readily identified in Tale culture. It is not so easy to determine what exactly are moral and ethical norms and obligations and their place in this culture. Certainly an exhaustive study of this, the most recondite and perhaps fundamental aspect of Tale education, could not be ventured without first precisely establishing the nature of these observances and how they are maintained. For the limited purpose of this paper it will be sufficient to select some representative examples of rules of conduct the violation or neglect of which is repugnant to the cultural idiom of the Tallensi or, otherwise expressed, would be considered blameworthy or disgraceful, sinful or wicked, uncouth or embarrassing to others. To ask how they are learnt is to ask how they are experienced by the growing child at different stages of its development.

To the native these norms have an arbitrary quality as if they require no validation, other than the fact that normal and equable social relations would be impossible without them, that they are indispensable for satisfactory social adjustment.[2] In Taleland, it is true, learn-

[1] See M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', loc. cit., for a more detailed description of this.

[2] The argument of this section owes much to the stimulus of Durkheim's *L'Éducation morale.*

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Like ourselves, the Tallensi recognize that some observances are merely matters of convention, others are matters of conscience, and a great many have elements of both. Their emphasis, however, differs conspicuously from ours. For example, the notion of cruelty to animals as delinquent or reprehensible would never occur to them. Small boys often catch mice or birds and keep them, tied with a strip of strong grass, to play with for days and eventually kill and eat them. It is, indeed, a crude form of nature study, for they learn a great deal about the habits, the anatomy, and physiology of the animals and birds they ostensibly maltreat in this way. They are never checked, and the suggestion that this was bad (the Tallensi have no expression, as far as I am aware, for our notion of cruelty) was received with amused laughter. It is a natural interest of children and not a moral problem; and it does not produce a general attitude of cruelty to animals. Both children and adults often show great affection for domestic dogs, for example.

Many rules of conduct are observed 'because it is befitting' (*de naromi*)—or because non-conformity is 'unbecoming' (*de pu naromi*)—i.e. it rouses embarrassment or ridicule or public criticism. Thus when greeting a superior, a man must sit with legs flat, crossed at the calves, bare-headed, eyes lowered, whereas a woman must crouch on all fours or sit with thighs close together and legs tucked under the buttocks. This latter posture in women is a matter of modesty. Up to about 9 or 10 years of age a little girl can sit in any way, legs spread out if she wishes, although from babyhood she has learnt to sit with legs tucked under. As she approaches puberty she will often be admonished 'sit properly' if she does not sit decorously. It is unbecoming for women to eat the domestic fowl, and I have often heard little girls of 9 or 10 boast that they are already refraining from it. A woman goes naked until she is advanced in her first pregnancy.

eyeing me from the security of his mother's lap, was heard to say that he was afraid I might cut off his penis. The Tale infant, in short, appears to be permitted to gratify all its wish impulses without restraint; yet it must do so in a social world over which it has no control, in which it is a weak dependant. Here, I think, still speaking in terms of superficial psychology, is the germ of the later domination of respect for authority in the child's moral development. It seems probable, from these observations, that the deeper psychology of the process is not unlike that which has been recorded by students of our own children, such as Dr. S. Isaacs.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

After that she must wear a perineal band even at night, in the privacy of her own room, for the sake of modesty. Not to do so, *de mara valom*, ' is embarrassing ' for her and others. Similarly it is indecorous for a young man, especially if he is married, to go about without a loin cloth. His comrades would scoff at him, womenfolk jeer, and his wife be ashamed. Yet the Tallensi have not the slightest sense of shame about the naked body or any physiological functions, all of which they discuss publicly and openly. Ask any one, child or adult, the sex of an infant and the answer will be to open its legs and expose the genitals with the word ' boy ' or ' girl '. An infant's excretory processes arouse no embarrassment and meet with no attempts at regulation. As we have seen it is expected to learn cleanliness in due course. The child is made to understand that excreting indoors is a nuisance to those who have to keep the house clean. No one would dream of chastising an infant for this misdemeanour. These are all matters of decency and decorum learnt without formal instructions as direct adjustments to the social space, through the influence of the expectation of normal behaviour.

It is otherwise with the morality of property. A thief incurs disgrace and universal opprobrium, and even small children of 6 and 7 express contempt for one. A child that steals, like one who neglects a task, can expect a severe beating if his father is a conscientious citizen. ' Don't let Tii (a boy of about 6) come and see your things,' said Batiigŋwol, a little girl of 7 or 8, to me one day, ' he 's a thief. He stole his mother's ground-nuts and meat and his father beat him and tied him up.' Theft is immoral as well as criminal. Lying, by contrast, is considered merely foolish and contemptible. It causes annoyance and a liar's comrades distrust him, but one would not punish a child for lying unless it led to serious consequences. Such misdemeanours, nevertheless, go beyond what is merely ' unbecoming '. They are not nice, *a-pu maha*.

Finally there is a type of observance which is a matter of conscience rather than of public approval or reprobation. Many of these have a ritual character and most of them are associated with mystical notions. There are food taboos which must be observed from infancy; there are ritual obligations such as those connected with mourning, which a person may escape till he reaches adulthood, but